

# UPTOWN

THE INDEPENDENT, UNOFFICIAL AND UNCENSORED MAGAZINE EXPLORING THE MUSICAL WORLD OF PRINCE

## There's Joy In Repetition

A Celebration Tour Report

## Building A New Nation

Impressions from "Prince: A Celebration" 2001

## Rainbow Children, It's Time 2 Rise

A Preview of *The Rainbow Children*

## Prince Gonna Get U High

The Unreleased *High* Album

## Freaks Gonna Bob 2 This

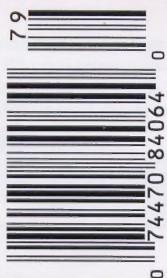
The First Eight Months of the NPG Music Club

FALL 2001

#49

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# #49

Kind thanks go to all our friends in the Prince community, including Troy, Ben, Val, Alex, Marylou, Jill, Kathy, and Thomas.



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Contributions to the magazine are much appreciated and will be fully credited.

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Hi there!

It looked like 2001 was going to be a busy Prince year. He launched the *A Celebration* tour in June and there was talk about a worldwide "greatest hits" tour. Then, coinciding with the news of Warner Bros.' *The Very Best Of Prince*, Prince very abruptly cancelled the tour after only a handful of dates. Apparently, he didn't want to give the impression that he was supporting the WB release by touring with a greatest hits show. Since then, things have been very quiet in the Prince world.

It's a shame that Prince's differences with Warner Bros. still haven't been settled. Think about how much more exciting it would have been if they had actually worked together on a greatest hits album and an accompanying full-scale world tour. As we have often said, being a Prince follower is rarely boring, but it can be very frustrating...

Several of the articles in this issue concern Prince's projects prior to this recent period of public inactivity. *There's Joy In Repetition* is a report on the seven *A Celebration* shows that Prince played before cancelling the tour. *Building A New Nation*, meanwhile, is an in-depth feature on the "Prince: A Celebration" event in June 2001. Much like we did last year, we asked some of our friends who attended the event to share their impressions and viewpoints. The "Celebrations" feature is comprised of four reports.

*Freaks Gonna Bob 2 This* is a look at the first eight months of the NPG Music Club. We feel the club has achieved the goals set out upon the launch in February 2001: to deliver music directly to the fans and to give the benefits of a fan club. The article offers both praise and a number of suggestions as how the quality of the club could be improved even further. Accompanying the article is a "trackography," detailing the releases thus far.

Prince's two most recent albums of new music are *High* and *The Rainbow Children*, none of which has been released at the time of writing. *Prince Gonna Get U High* discusses the contents of *High* and *Rainbow Children, It's Time 2 Rise* is a preview of *The Rainbow Children*, which generated disparate reactions amongst the fans at the "Prince: A Celebration" event.

Our next issue, #50, will be our 10th Year Anniversary issue! We're planning a retrospective on UPTOWN's 10 years. However, we will also have articles that focus on more current events, including a survey of Prince's cyber-only music. So hopefully, Prince's recent "silence" will be followed by a period bursting with new ideas and projects.

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## RELEASE OF THE VERY BEST OF PRINCE

Warner Bros. in cooperation with Rhino Records released a new greatest hits compilation entitled *The Very Best Of Prince* on 31 July (US release date). It contains the following 17 songs: "I Wanna Be Your Lover" / "1999" / "Little Red Corvette" / "When Doves Cry" / "Let's Go Crazy" / "Purple Rain" / "I Would Die 4 U" / "Raspberry Beret" / "Kiss" / "Sign O' The Times" / "U Got The Look" / "Alphabet St." / "Thieves In The Temple" / "Gett Off" / "Cream" / "Diamonds And Pearls" / "Money Don't Matter 2 Night."

The album debuted at number 66 on the *Billboard* album chart, with approximately 25,000 copies sold in its first week. It dropped to number 77 in its second week. It peaked at number two in the UK.

Prince responded to the release by cancelling the remainder of his *A Celebration* tour; he considered the tour an endorsement of the album and didn't want to give the impression that he was supporting the release by touring with a greatest hits show. He also criticized the album on NPG Music Club, saying that he will make very little money from the album. However, industry insiders have pointed out that with his royalties (both artist's and writer's) and publisher's share, he does stand to make a great deal of money from the sales of the album despite not owning the masters. As previously reported in *UPTOWN*, Warner Bros. contacted and had several discussions with Prince's legal representatives regarding his potential involvement in the production and assembling of the greatest hits package. At one point, he was interested and was going to contribute a couple of new tracks for the compilation. Apparently, Warner Bros. was willing to increase his share even more than what the old contracts obligate them to, but, in the end, Prince said no.

## THE RAINBOW CHILDREN DOCUMENTARY

Kevin Smith, director of movies like *Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy*, *Dogma*, and the new *Jay And Silent Bob Strike Back*, attended the "Prince: A Celebration" event in Minneapolis, shooting footage for a projected documentary. Prince had seen *Dogma* and figured that Smith would be a natural choice to direct the piece, figuring that he was also a "fan of Jesus," according to Smith, who was rather baffled as he has never filmed any documentary-type films. Still, Smith jumped at the chance to work with someone he admired so much. Ultimately, though, he appears to have mixed emotions about the project. While he has said that he found Prince to be highly intelligent and likeable, he also expressed frustration with his tendency to speak in riddles. Prince never told Smith what he thought of the footage or how it would be used. "It would have been nice to have heard some input," said Smith. "As it is, I have no idea if the guy liked it or not." If, when, and how this documentary will see the light of day is entirely in Prince's hands. Incidentally, Morris Day and The Time have a cameo appearance near the end of *Jay And Silent Bob Strike Back*, performing "Jungle Love."

## THE RAINBOW CHILDREN RELEASE PLANS

The NPG Music Club announced on 28 August that *The Rainbow Children*, described as "the controversial new album from Prince," will be released through the club in October.

## PRINCE ON ALBUMS WITH FONKY BALD HEADS AND DVS

Prince has worked on tracks with rapper DVS.

He is also credited as co-writer with Kirk Johnson of "Rowdy Mac" on Fonky Bald Heads' recent independent release *Self Titled Album*.

## "U MAKE MY SUN SHINE" ON THE CHARTS

The "U Make My Sun Shine" single peaked at number 59 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 Singles Sales chart and at number 26 on the Hot R&B/Hip-hop Singles Sales chart.

## RARE SONGS ON THE AIR

## ONE WEBSITE

Prince's website NPG Online LTD joined forces with the NPG Music Club website on 7 July because "as the NPG online experience evolves, the need for many websites no longer exists." The new website is housed at [www.npgmusicclub.com](http://www.npgmusicclub.com).

## PRESS CONFERENCE

Prince held a 90-minute press conference at Paisley Park on 7 June to announce the "Prince: A Celebration" event and talk about *The Rainbow Children* amongst other things. "The first person to wish me happy birthday gets dropped in the alligator moat," he joked at the outset of the meeting. "I'm working independently now, and when you're not in the mainstream, you have to let people know what you're doing from time to time," Prince explained. He said that he wanted "to put the focus back on the music." He didn't go into detail about his religious convictions, but said that he has been reading the Bible a great deal lately, thinking about how it "clearly defines the roles of men and women." He wants parents and older siblings to bring children to his shows and has vowed to omit "overt swear words" from his songs.

## COMMON AT PAISLEY PARK

Rapper Common and ?uestlove spent three days at Paisley Park in early July working on Common's next album, which utilises a rhythm section borrowed from D'Angelo's tour band. Most of their work has taken place at New York's Electric Lady studios, but Prince asked them at the "A Celebration" event to spend some days at Paisley Park "to jam and whatever." However, Prince never showed up so the proposed jams never developed.

## PRINCE RECEIVES AWARD

On 14 April, Prince received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Black College Radio convention held at the Renaissance Hotel in Atlanta. After a brief thank you acceptance, he spoke at length about the NPG Music Club and his struggle for independence and ownership of his own music.

## UK PARTY

The Dawn Experience, UK's premiere Prince fan organisation, presents its first Prince Rave Party 2001, a night of pure Prince and Prince-inspired music at a 200-capacity venue in the heart of London, England. There will be video screens showing rarely seen Prince videos all night as well as free giveaways.

This will be the biggest Prince party of its kind ever held in the UK, organised by fans. *UPTOWN*'s Gavin McLaughlin and his girlfriend Sam will be present to answer any questions on subscribing to *UPTOWN* in the UK.

The place is Extra Time Bar, 1 Long Lane, Barbican, London EC1, Saturday 24 November 2001, from 7 pm until 2 am. Tickets are £7 in advance (a limited number of tickets will be available on the door at £10 per person). No admission to non-ticket holders after 9 pm. Over 18s only. Tickets are available now by mail only. Send an SAE with cheque/postal order made payable to The Dawn Productions to PO Box 25699, London N17 7AZ, England. Visit [www.thedawnexperience.co.uk](http://www.thedawnexperience.co.uk) for further updates. Info contacts: [freedom@thedawnfreeuk.com](mailto:freedom@thedawnfreeuk.com). Telephone 07802 195 055

## JOHN L. NELSON DIES

Prince's father, John L. Nelson, died Saturday morning, 25 August, at his Chanhassen home. He was 85 years old. For the past few years, he lived in the purple house that Prince once lived in. The funeral was held on 31 August at Zion Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Tyka Nelson sang "Hello Dolly," the first song her father had taught her. A woman who was his caretaker in his final months talked about how she and Nelson often shared late-night jam sessions, with Nelson on piano and her standing in as drummer. Prince was not seen in the sanctuary of the church. Former Revolution members Bobby Z. Rivkin and Matt Fink were among the 50 people in attendance.

## INTERVIEWS

A few Prince interviews have appeared since the last issue of *UPTOWN*:

*Gotham* (May): This is a glossy New York magazine.

*Yahoo! Internet Life* (June): Prince was the cover story.

*Chanhassen Villager* (6 June): Prince replied to questions e-mailed to him.

*Pioneer Press* (12 June): An e-mail interview.

*Detroit Free Press* (23 June): Another e-mail interview.

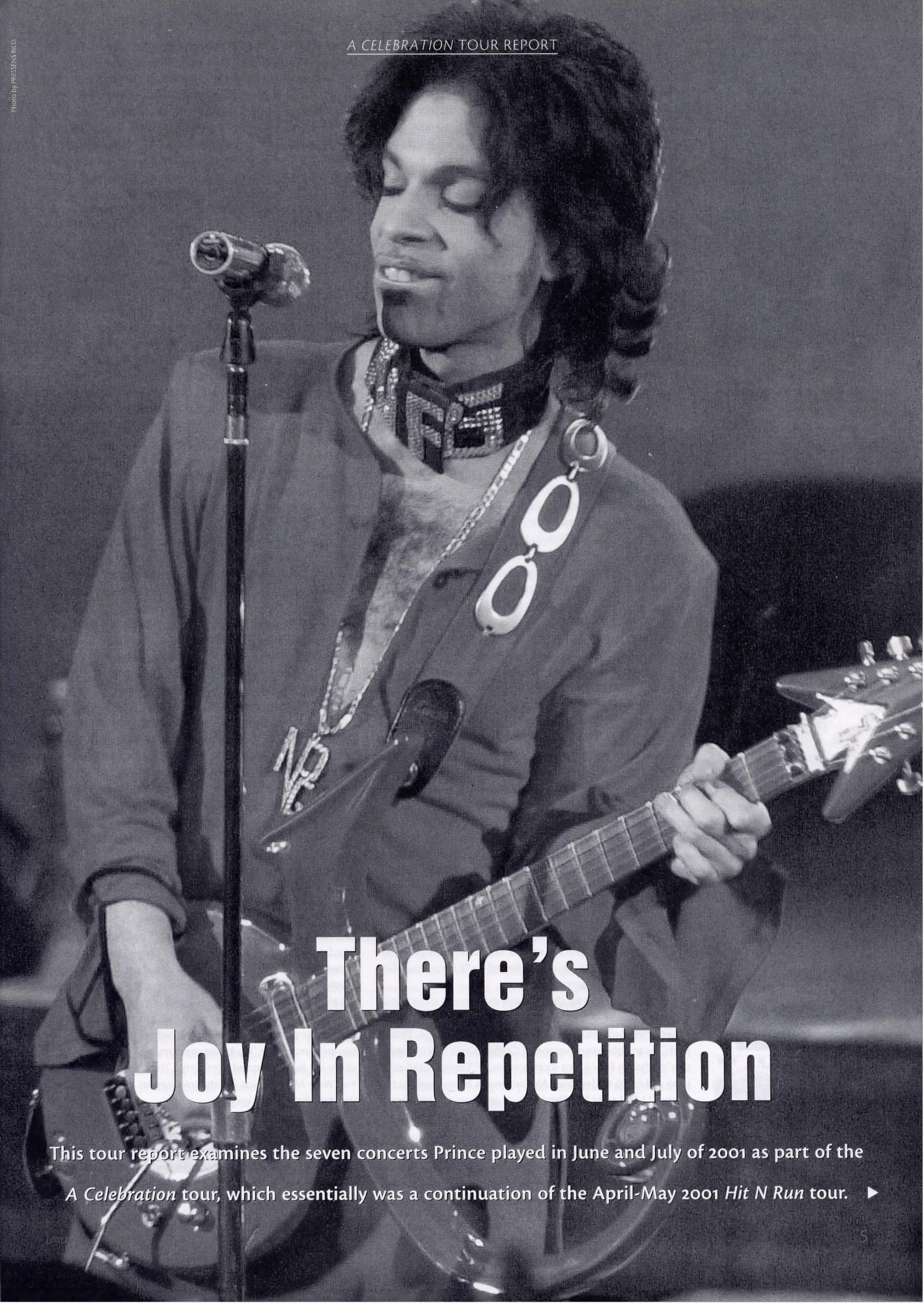
## DUTCH PARTY

On Saturday, 6 April 2002, a Prince party will be organised by Freak-O-Matic Productions (FOMP) in conjunction with *UPTOWN* Benelux. The place has not yet been determined. You can get information about the event at <http://fomp.start.be> or [www.uptown.se/benelux](http://www.uptown.se/benelux). All profits will go to the Love 4 One Another charities, for the love of music and for the love of one another.

The event will include a live performance of Days Of Wild, their first-ever European performance, a DJ set by DJ Brother Jules from Minneapolis and a DJ set by DJ Le Freak and DJ Markee (Belgium). More details will follow. Make sure to check out the URL above. This will be a night to remember – the biggest European Prince party ever.

A CELEBRATION TOUR REPORT

Photo by PRESSENS BILD

A black and white photograph of Prince performing live. He is wearing a dark jacket over a patterned shirt and a necklace with large circular pendants. He has his eyes closed and is singing into a microphone. His right hand is on the neck of an electric guitar, which has 'NR' written on it. The background is dark, suggesting a stage setting.

# There's Joy In Repetition

This tour report examines the seven concerts Prince played in June and July of 2001 as part of the *A Celebration tour*, which essentially was a continuation of the April-May 2001 *Hit N Run* tour. ►

PRINCE'S TWO CONCERTS AT ST. PAUL'S XCEL ENERGY CENTER during the "Prince: A Celebration" week in June kicked off his new tour entitled *A Celebration*. Over 20 dates, including Prince's first shows in Alaska, were scheduled until early August. However, the tour was cancelled after only seven concerts. No official explanation was given at the time but it has since been confirmed by sources close to Prince that he considered the tour an endorsement of Warner Bros.' *The Very Best Of Prince* and he didn't want to give the impression that he was supporting the release. At the time of writing (early September), it is unclear if the tour will be resumed at a later date.

### The band

The NPG line-up was the same as on the *Hit N Run* 2001 tour: Mike Scott (guitar), Rhonda Smith (bass), Morris Hayes and Kip Blackshire (keyboards), John Blackwell (drums), Najee (saxophone, flute), and Geneva (dancing, backing vocals). Millenia guested on several songs, including "U Make My Sun Shine." Kirk Johnson sometimes guested to play percussion on "Sexy Dancer."

### The opening act

Fonky Bald Heads opened some of the shows for Prince with a 25 to 30-minute set. Prince occasionally guested onstage with the band.

### The dates

The following shows were played before the tour was cancelled:

- 15 June: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, MN
- 16 June: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, MN
- 21 June: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, OH
- 23 June: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, MI
- 27 June: Civic Auditorium, Omaha, NE
- 28 June: Summerfest: Marcus Amphitheater, Milwaukee, WI
- 6 July: Montreal International Jazz Festival:  
Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Montreal, Canada

### The show and set list

The *A Celebration* show was very similar to the two editions of the *Hit N Run* tour, placing the emphasis on Prince's music and musicianship rather than theatrics. The shows were usually around two hours. Retaining the bulk of the 2001 *Hit N Run* tour set, the repertoire of songs was augmented by two new segments of songs, including some less well-known numbers like "Still Would Stand All Time" and "Free," as well as fan favourites such as "Bambi," "Starfish And Coffee," and "Sometimes It Snows In April." Prince also introduced a "F" song, "Eye Love U, But Eye Don't Trust U Anymore" from *Rave Un2 The Joy Fantastic*.

One of the new segments combined guitar-driven rockers "Bambi," "When You Were Mine" and "3 Chains O' Gold" (preceded by an instrumental portion of "And God Created Woman") with ballads "Still Would Stand All Time" (preceded by a bit of "Anna Stesia") and "Adore" (with a snippet of "The Question Of U" as an outro). The other segment was a piano sit-down comprised of full-length versions of "Free," "Starfish And Coffee," "Eye Love U, But Eye Don't Trust U Anymore," and "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore." Prince also started "Delirious" at the piano before the band joined in. This was followed by "If I Was Your Girlfriend" with full band accompaniment.

Other notable set list changes were the removal of the instrumental version of "Talkin' Loud And Sayin' Nothing" (previously played after Madhouse's "Four") and the replacement of "Darling Nikki" by an abbreviated version of *Graffiti Bridge*'s "Joy In Repetition" (although Prince kept short portions of "Darling Nikki" as an intro and outro to the song). Also new was a bluesy segment following "U Make My Sun Shine," which saw Prince in an "Electric Man"-styled conversation with his microphone about his "angel so divine."

The *A Celebration* tour set can be divided into six different sub-sections containing fairly fixed sequences of songs. Each show featured a combination of four or five of the sections, with two to four additional songs as encores. Like on the *Hit N Run* tours, the

songs played as encores were nearly always chosen from 'Rain,' "Come On," "U Got The Look," "Kiss," and "Gett Off."

The sections were the following: (A) The opening segment of the 2001 *Hit N Run* show: "Uptown" / "Controversy" / "MC" / "The Work – Part 1" / "Cream." (B) The second segment of *N Run* shows: "Little Red Corvette" / "I Wanna Be Your Li" / "Sexy Dancer" / "Housequake" / "The Ballad Of Dorothy Pe" / "Four." (C) The third, "ballad segment" of the 2001 *Hit N Run*: "U Make My Sun Shine" / "I Could Never Take The Place C Man" – "Summertime" / "Do Me, Baby" / "Scandalous" / "monds And Pearls" / "The Beautiful Ones" / "Nothing Compares 2 U." (D) The "Purple Rain segment" of the *Hit N Run* show but "Joy In Repetition" instead of "Darling Nikki": "Let's Go C" / "Take Me With U" / "Raspberry Beret" / "Darling Nikki" [brief – "Joy In Repetition" – "Darling Nikki" [brief outro] / "When Cry" / Father's Song" / "Computer Blue" [instrumental version of "The One" [intro music] – "I Would Die 4 U" [words only] – "I'm A Star" [words only] / "God" [instrumental version]. (E) segment: "When You Were Mine" / "Bambi" / "And God Created Woman" [brief instrumental version] – "3 Chains O' Gold" / "Stesia" [brief instrumental version] – "Still Would Stand All Time" / "Adore" – "The Question Of U" [brief instrumental version]. A piano sit-down segment: "Free" / "Starfish And Coffee" / "Sometimes It Snows In April" / "Eye Love U, But Eye Don't Trust U Anymore" / "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore" / "Delirious" / "If I Was Your Girlfriend."

"Gett Off" and "Come On" occasionally included chant "Eye Like Funky Music" or a portion of Millenia's "Turn Back" (with the girls providing vocals).

Prince and The NPG had also rehearsed a completely different, mostly instrumental set, which was played only once, International Jazz Festival in Montreal. The set list, using the notation, is given for each show in the report on the individual concerts.

### The concerts

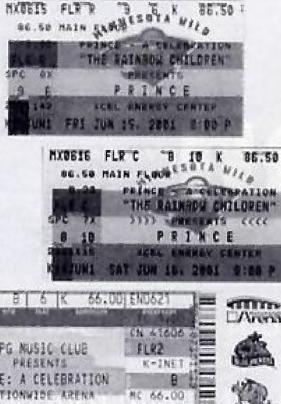
#### 15 June: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul

Set list: (A) / (B) / (C) / (D) / "Purple Rain" / "Come On"

Prince rehearsed for the show from 7:15 to 8:20 pm, starting with an eight-minute instrumental jam on "Head." He continued with a short instrumental jam on "Uptown" and another jam before he was joined by "Prince: A Celebration" VIP passholders, who were able to attend the last 40 minutes of the show. "NPG Music Club, come all down!" Prince greeted the fans as he entered. "Music Club members, as soon as the soundcheck you can go to your good seats, OK? But for right now, just chill and enjoy!" Prince was driven to the stage with an electro mob and did a great deal of mixing at the soundboard. He seemed upset with the sound and the guy working the board, even something like "I guess someone doesn't feel like getting paid tonight." He mentioned the guilty party by name and said that might be out of a job tomorrow. The next day, the technician's name was mentioned on NPG Online.

They worked on "When You Were Mine," before moving to "When Doves Cry," "Father's Song" and "The Greatest Love Ever Sold" with some lines from Millenia's song "Turn Back" added with Millenia onstage. Next was a short "Uptown," which Prince jokingly commented on the cold air temperature in the arena while rubbing his hands. "Is it hot in here to you all? Want the air [conditioning] turned up? It's a little hot, I think. I think these people would be tired of winter, wouldn't you?" He also announced that "Kip kicked me in my leg... this one," pointing to his left leg. Kip replied, "I'm sorry." The last song was "You Were Mine," which was the sole number of the soundcheck that included Prince's vocals.

There was no opening act and Prince's concert began at 8:30 pm, lasting until 11:20 pm. Somewhat disappointingly, it was a regular *Hit N Run/A Celebration* show, lacking anything out of the ordinary. Many of the fans that attended had already seen the show several times. Maceo Parker and his trombone player Boyer (formerly with the P-Funk Allstars) guested on several



Prince introduced his band, he didn't know Greg's name, so just said "Mr. trombone player." Erykah Badu and Common joined onstage for an extended "Come On," which included snippets from "(Eye Like) Funky Music" and some lines from Millenia's "Turn Back Now" with Millenia onstage. Common also added some freestyle raps to "Come On."

The afterparty at Paisley Park featured no performances, but he did take the microphone while the DJ was playing "It's Gonna Be A Beautiful Night" and sang along to some of the lyrics. A snippet from the *Hit N Run* show in San Diego in April was played on screen (from "Uptown" until "Little Red Corvette").

#### June: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul

Set list: (D) / "Purple Rain" / (E) / (B) / (F) / "U Got The Look" / "Kiss" / "Gett Off" / "Come On"

Prince and The NPG rehearsed from 7:25 to 8:35 pm. Prince did not sing during the entire session, instead directing the band and talking to the technicians and audience. They kicked off with a funky instrumental jam that slowly evolved into James Brown's "Get Up I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine." A bit of the well-known riff of Deep Purple's "Smoke On The Water" was played before the whole band joined for a jam on Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo (Slight Return)," which also included snippets from another possibly a Hendrix track. "You're alright, Takumi?" Prince asked his guitar technician. "Not quite? What you need? We gotta people wanna get inside now."

After another funky jam, the "A Celebration" VIP pass holders were let in the arena and they were able to attend the last 50 minutes of the session. Prince commented, "Take it easy before you slip and fall! So you just wait over on the side for soundcheck and then you'll come down to the front if you don't mind. What a wonderful bunch you are." He also asked them, "We got enough right?" While Prince was giving more technical instructions, he spun some tracks including "Simon Says." Prince then continued with short instrumental takes on "Delirious," "When You Were Mine," "Uptown," and a jam on "Let's Work" with Maceo Parker guesting on saxophone. He also remained onstage for a five-minute workout on James Brown's "The Payback" and "Ain't It Funny Now." Brief portions of "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" and "Uptown" were next, followed by a funky jam that bore some resemblance to "Housequake." Another instrumental funk jam with a piano followed. It was loosely based on Brown's "The Payback," and also included a motif from Parliament's "P. Funk (Wants To Be Unkunked Up)." The session closed with some of "The Greatest Prince Ever Sold (Eve Remix)," a piano ballad by Kip Blackshire, "Uptown."

Fonky Bald Heads played a 25-minute set, from 9:10 to 9:35 pm. Prince guested briefly during their set. Prince took the stage at 9:35 pm, playing a 125-minute set that ended at 12:15 am. The concert was a vast improvement on the first night, with the introduction of the two new segments of songs. Many felt it was a first-night show but not "the bomb" as they had expected. Whereas the first night was sold-out, the second night was attended by around 18,000 people in the 18,000-capacity Excel Energy Center.

Kicking off with "Let's Go Crazy," the concert opened with the "purple Rain segment" of the *Hit N Run* show. This sequence of songs was followed by "Purple Rain" before Prince debuted the remainder of songs, from "When You Were Mine" to "Adore." It was back to the regular *Hit N Run* repertoire, with "Little Red Corvette," "I Wanna Be Your Lover," "Sexy Dancer," "Housequake," and "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" going into it. Kirk Johnson and Damon Dickson guested for "Sexy Dancer," which turned into a funky jam. Like the previous night, Maceo Parker and Greg Boyer also guested on several songs.

The show continued with a piano sit-down, which was the highlight of the night: "Free," "Starfish And Coffee," "Sometimes It Pays In April," "Eye Love U, But Eye Don't Trust U Anymore," "Come U Don't Call Me Anymore," "Delirious," and "If I Was Your Girlfriend," after which Prince left the stage. He returned for three encores: "U Got The Look," "Kiss," "Gett Off," and "Come On."

was incorporated into "Kiss," while "Gett Off" included some of "Turn Back Now" with Millenia providing vocals. DVS participated on "Come On," which was the closing number.

Prince was supposed to do a scheduled third encore but for some reason the lights came up. The hired security guards were yelling into their walkie-talkies, "What are you doing? Prince is about to come back out! He is doing three more songs! Turn the Lights off!" Security was frantic but the lights were turned out to no avail. Most people in the front rows could see Kip and Morris standing in the back, to the left side of the stage. The three songs planned for the encore were "Paisley Park," "Alphabet St." and "Dolphin." The word after was that Prince was extremely displeased since the show was being filmed and he had planned to bring out all the stops for a grand finale. It has not been able to clarify whether the shutdown of the show was due to curfew or if it was a technical error.

There was no Paisley Park afterparty performance again but footage from the show earlier in the night was aired. Nothing special happened at the afterparty, although at 4:45 am "The Rainbow Children" and "Come 2gether as 1" were played. Immediately afterwards, people were asked to exit Paisley.

#### 21 June: Nationwide Arena, Columbus

Set list: (A) / (B) / (C) / (D) / "Purple Rain" / "U Got The Look" / "Kiss" / "Gett Off"

The Nationwide Arena utilised a "half-arena" seating set up for the show, with half of it blocked off behind a large black curtain. The show was nearly sold-out with approximately 9,000 people in attendance. Fonky Bald Heads played a 25-minute opening set from 8:00 to 8:25 pm before Prince finally took to the stage at 8:30 pm and played until around 10:55 pm.

Prince was in a great mood and despite the fact that the show was the regular set, several songs were stretched out longer than usual and the show didn't seem as rushed as some of the other *Hit N Run* and *A Celebration* concerts. "Sexy Dancer" and "Housequake" were extended to almost 10 minutes as several people were brought onstage to dance, including one rather large woman that Prince really got a kick out of. Kirk Johnson guested onstage to play percussion on "Sexy Dancer." "Gett Off" was also extended quite a bit.

Although nearly technically flawless, the show did have one glaring mistake: during "God" the drum loop to "When Doves Cry" kicked in for a few seconds before they could turn it off, Najee finished his solo as usual, while Prince went back stage to discuss the matter with his technicians. Prior to "Purple Rain," Prince spoke about the importance of families staying together, but aborted his speech by proclaiming, "I didn't come here to preach!"

The official afterparty was held at Alrosa Villa. Prince arrived around 10:00 am and thanked the crowd from the DJ booth for coming. Several unreleased tracks were played including "High" and "My Medallion," along with several mixes from *Rave In2 The Joy Fantastic*.

#### 23 June: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit

Set list: (D) / (E) / (B) / (F) / "Purple Rain" / "U Got The Look" / "Kiss" / "Gett Off"

Perhaps in response to the lacklustre reviews of Prince's appearance in the Motor City last November and the steep ticket prices (\$100 for all floor and lower bowl seating), the Joe Louis Arena was not sold out. Approximately 12,000 people attended.

The pre-show soundcheck featured "If I Was Your Girlfriend," "Let's Go Crazy," and extensive work on "Let's Work" with a little bit of The Time's "Cool" thrown in. It was also overheard that Prince was upset during the private soundcheck when the ushers kept peeking in on the proceedings. Fonky Bald Heads played their usual, 30-minute opening set from 8:05 to 8:35 pm before Prince finally took to the stage promptly at 9:00 pm.

The two new segments of songs were played for only the second time during the show. The set was the same as the second Xcel Energy Center show but "Purple Rain" was played as the first

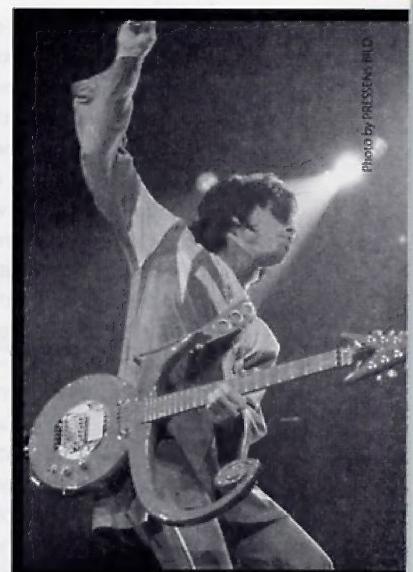


Photo by PRESSEN PHD

) and "Come On" was omitted. The crowd to the new songs was extremely enthusiastic. Of "When You Were Mine" and "Bambi" really the house down, as did the surprise inclusion would Stand All Time" and "Adore."

He was in a great mood, even though he suffered technical problems with his guitar during "Crazy," to the point where he finally took it off and it to the floor without performing the closer. He was visibly upset with his technician, but him to let it bother him too much. Najee was the majority of his usual solo parts were covered on guitar to phenomenal, emotional effect, notably during "God" and "Father's Song."

Johnson joined Prince during "Sexy Dancer" on congas while Prince played timbales. Several were brought on to dance during this, including guys dressed in purple and red "zoot" suits, with matching hats. This jam was extended "Housequake" and even more people were up onstage.

He experienced more sound problems during piano portion. After singing the opening "I Love You, But I Can't Trust U Anymore" he said something to the effect of "you all y for that yet" before sauntering over towards keyboard, motioning frantically and shooting s to the techs to raise the levels on his microphone. Prince's sense of humour stood out during "If I'm Your Girlfriend," which was the first song played second piano portion was concluded, as two guys wearing white overalls with the words "lovers" written across the back came out to cut of the way.

"many hits, so little time," Prince exclaimed during "Purple Rain," and his introduction to this was interesting as he explained why he always of Detroit as his "second home." He also credited (famous '80s local DJ) for making him popularity and that those were the "good' ol' days of when you didn't hear the "same 20 songs every hour" by the same artists. He said he wanted more of the music he grew up with, mentioning Earth, Wind & Fire's "Saturday Night," Sly and the Family Stone's "Thank You (Faletinme be Mice Elf James Brown's "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm and several others.

Following "Purple Rain" the band left the stage and chanted "we want Prince" repeatedly. After minutes of this Prince came out and with a sly "That's what I like to hear," before beginning three of "U Got The Look," "Kiss," and "Get Off" from "(Eye Like) Funky Music"). Once again 20 people were brought onstage to dance, a little girl who looked to be about six or seven old who just shrugged her shoulders when put the microphone up to her mouth to solo this."

The official afterparty was held at the Olympia within the Joe Louis Arena complex itself. Admission \$25 per person and NPG Music Club members purchase their tickets in advance prior to the Prince arrived around midnight and stayed until 2:00 am, spending most of his time in a private adjacent to the main seating area. DJ Dudley D Fonky Bald Heads spun tunes all night. Prince went out to the DJ booth a couple of times during the first of which he thanked everyone going out and asked, "Are ya'll going to church in King? Wanna hear my new song?" before having say "High." He then swiftly retreated when the

crowd around him became too great (causing him to remark on NPGOnline on 25 June, "BODYGUARDS? Who needz them? PRINCE does! Hairpulling and butt grabbing? From grown folks, mind u-in an adult establishment. And we thought the '80s were over. Appears not. Detroit still rocks tho!"). "Mad" and "My Medallion" were also played among other Prince tunes.

## 27 June: Civic Auditorium, Omaha

Set list: (A) / (B) / (C) / (D) / "Purple Rain" / "Kiss" / "Come On."

The Civic Auditorium was attended by about 6,000 people, which was 1,000 short of selling out. Fonky Bald Heads opened with their regular set. Prince's show featured the normal set, with three encores. "Purple Rain," "Kiss," and "Come On." There are very few reports from the show but it appears to have been a fairly ordinary show. "We gotta get the families back together, y'all," Prince said at one point. "We don't respect our parents anymore. We don't respect our women anymore." He added, "I didn't come to preach tonight. I came to dance."

## 28 June: Summerfest:

### Marcus Amphitheater, Milwaukee

Tentative set list: (D) / (B) / (E) / (F) / "Kiss" / "Do Me, Baby" / "Scandalous" / "Purple Rain."

Prince's concert opened the Summerfest in Milwaukee. His show was attended by about 22,000 people. Prince kicked off the show with a high-energy rendition of "Let's Go Crazy," which was followed by the "Purple Rain segment" of songs like in Detroit. Next came "Little Red Corvette," "I Wanna Be Your Lover," "Sexy Dancer," "Housequake," "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker," and "Four." The second half of the show featured the two new segments before Prince capped the show with "Kiss." Unusually, the encores were "Do Me, Baby," "Scandalous," and "Purple Rain."

The afterparty was held in a local club, which was about two-thirds full. DVS was the DJ. Prince was in a VIP area. His bodyguards let in a few people. Prince did a "walk-through" outside the VIP area at 1:45 am, 15 minutes before closing time. He was surrounded by bodyguards. He stayed at the DJ booth for about 10 minutes, playing some songs. He stood up a couple of times so fans who had been waiting could see him, but he spent most of the time sitting down behind the high booth, unseen by the crowd. At 2:00 pm, security announced that it was closing time and that everyone had to leave. Prince remained inside the club, though, and some people, mostly women, were let back into the club. People who were left standing outside felt the treatment was very unfair. Prince danced with the women for a while, then he sat up on the bar and talked to the female bartender. Prince left the club some time after 4:00 pm.

## 6 July: Montreal International Jazz Festival:

### Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Montreal

Set list (first set): "Jazz" set.

Set list (second set): (A) minus "Mutiny" / (B) minus "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" and "Four" / (C) minus "U Make My Sun Shine" / "The Jam" / "Purple Rain."

Prince topped the bill at the International Jazz Festival in Montreal, headlining the final night of the week-long event. He played two sets at Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, where he also played on the 1997-98 *Jam Of The Year* tour. Much to the surprise of the Prince fans in the audience, the first set, which began at around 8:45 pm, featured a mostly instrumental jazz-flavoured repertoire by Prince and The NPG.

The set opened with a lengthy drum solo by John Blackwell. After a few minutes, he was joined by Najee on flute. As John's drums swelled slowly, Prince appeared onstage, strolling to Kip Blackshire's keyboard. Faced slightly away from the audience, he began to improvise, adding a touch of vocoder à la Roger Troutman and many others. He could be heard exhorting, "Montreal, get it on." This long intro led into "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" and "Four." The latter became another instrumental jam session with Prince playing keyboards and scatting.

After 30 minutes or so at the keyboard, Prince picked up his guitar and played a solo before Larry Graham joined in the activities, playing bass on "Eyemagettin'." Graham wandered into the crowd and stood atop a chair while playing. Back onstage, Prince towed him off. Next, Prince returned to the keyboard for a fascinating number, which saw him sampling himself to create loops to play over. He then picked up the guitar again, jamming some with Mike Scott and Graham. At one point, he asked Mike to do a guitar solo. As Mike was tearing it up, Prince put his foot on Mike's guitar pedal and they did a joint solo. Next was a bluesy rendition of "Girls And Boys," followed by some soloing by Najee. Prince switched to bass for another instrumental number (possibly a Madhouse piece). They continued with an instrumental take on "Talkin' Loud And Sayin' Nothing." Prince's faint vocal could be heard even though he had his back turned to the microphone; he was actually singing really loud onstage and the microphone was picking it up. Prince applauded the crowd and the band as the jam ended. He sat down at the keyboard, asking, "Montreal, how late can you stay up?" He closed the first set with "Forever In My Life," an unrecognized song, and Joni Mitchell's "A Case Of You." He announced that they would be taking a short break. The crowd response was fantastic, with a long standing ovation for Prince and the band.

Prince's 80-minute "jazz set" took everyone by surprise. Few had expected him to perform such a daring set. Certainly, many parts were rehearsed but many times Prince would do something off-the-cuff. The audience could never tell what was going to happen next which made it highly exciting. Prince paid close attention to cuing his band members in to play. He would raise his hand or ask John Blackwell to bring the tempo up or down. Prince was in a very relaxed mood, at times walking around onstage to watch his band members play. He didn't dance and was dressed more low-key than usual, emphasizing that it was about the music.

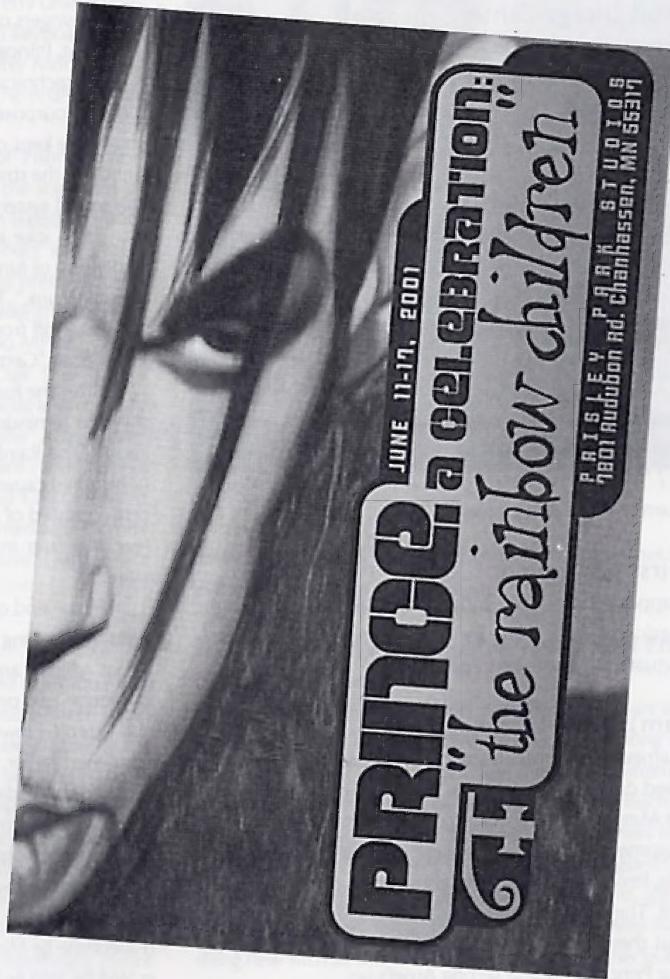
Prince returned after a 15-minute intermission launching into "Uptown," "Controversy," and "Let's Work," during which he remarked, "Who was that onstage 10 minutes ago?" They proceeded to play a slightly abbreviated version of the regular Hit N Run set. "The Work – Pt. 1" followed after "Let's Work," then came "Cream," "Little Red Corvette," and "I Wanna Be Your Lover." Trumpet player Roy Hargrove guested on "Sexy Dancer." The set continued with "Housequake," "Could Never Take The Place Of Your Man," going into "Summertime," and the ballad segment: "Do Me, Baby," "Scandalous," "Diamonds And Pearls," "The Beautiful Ones," and "Nothing Compares 2 U." They left the stage for five minutes, returning with Larry Graham for a jam on "The Jam." After another short break, Prince closed the show with "Purple Rain."

## Reports b

Frédéric Heller, Harold Lewis, Eric Benchimo

Mike Antonich, Robin Kochur, Dennis Roszkowski

Jseven, Troy Motes, and Joe Kelley



# Building A New Nation

Prince reprised the highly successful "Prince: A Celebration" event from 2000, opening the doors of Paisley Park from 11 to 17 June 2001 for a number of activities, including nightly concerts, *The Rainbow Children* listening parties, and group discussions about the new album. Much like we did last year, we asked some of our friends who attended the event to share their impressions and viewpoints. Our "Celebrations" feature is comprised of four reports. Prince played two concerts at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul during the week but they are discussed in our *A Celebration* tour report elsewhere in this issue. However, he also played an unannounced concert at Paisley Park and made several guest appearances during the week, all of which are described in this feature.

# Day by Day Recap

by Frédéric Heller

## 8 June: Xcel Energy Center rehearsal

Fans reported that Prince and The NPG were rehearsing for the Xcel shows in the evening. They tried to take an earful of the set list (from the street), but the security asked them to leave the area.

## 11 June: Day activities

The first *The Rainbow Children* listening session and subsequent group discussions were held in the morning. This was repeated every day.

In the afternoon, Prince and the band were rehearsing at the Soundstage. The rehearsal started around 2:00 pm. With the exception of "Gett Off (Houstyle)" (possibly played as a warm-up), the focus was on the beginning of the regular *Hit 'N' Run* set list. The following songs were heard from outside: "Gett Off (Houstyle)" / tape intro / "Uptown" / "Controversy" / "Mutiny" / "The Work – Pt. 1" / "Cream" / "Little Red Corvette."

## 11 June: First party night

Prince appeared on the Soundstage for the first time around 11:20 pm, checking out the party for about 15 minutes from one of the entries situated in a corner of the hall.

## 12 June (am): Amel Larrieux

Amel Larrieux performed from 1:10 to 2:15 am. Her show was heavily delayed due to a tornado that affected Chanhassen as well as the whole Minneapolis/St. Paul airport area. She arrived late, but also her equipment and her band were delayed because of the storm. At first, Prince's gear was being prepared, in case she couldn't make it at all. The audience was already hoping for a Prince performance, but then Amel's equipment finally arrived and they began removing Prince's gear and setting Amel's up.

Amel's jazz-tinged R&B/gospel set was OK. She has a nice voice and did a few a cappella segments. Still, I rank this performance as the weakest of the celebration. Luckily, the Prince gig still happened, later in the night!

## 12 June (am): Unannounced Prince concert

Close to 3:00 am, Prince and The NPG with Millenia appeared on stage as the studio version of "The Daisy Chain" was played over the PA. Prince strapped on his bass guitar and they started to jam over the tune. The jam continued after the PA music ended. Prince inserted an instrumental bit (from the bassline) of Sly Stone's "Thank You (Falletinme Be Mice Elf Agin)." After this jam, Prince gave props to the following night's act The Time, and started to play a bit of

the instrumental beginning of their "777-9311" (of course written himself). After exchanging his bass for his Fender guitar, Prince played a rare and full-blown rendition of Doris Day's/Sly Sto "Que Sera Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be)" with Millenia as background singers on the chorus.

Next, Prince wanted to embark on a guitar jam; I don't know if it was a technical glitch, if he had pushed the wrong pedal or if he did it on purpose, but as he wanted to play the guitar, there was sound! He kept on playing though, and had a lot of fun; you could only hear the strings in the front rows, but there was no sound from the sound system (the band was not playing, so it was silent) started to joke around, telling stories about reaching the "fourth dimension of funk," the one you can't hear, and titled the jam "Invisible Funk." The subsequent "real" instrumental jam included the guitar riff from James Brown's "The Payback," which was also included in "Gett Off" on the *Hit N Run* tour.

After the funk jam, Prince talked to the audience; he said the vibe reminded him of the Friday night parties. He also talked about "The Rainbow Children" and the storm earlier in the night (which had caused Amel Larrieux's long delay). The rest of the concert consisted of portions from the two new segments (as played a few days later in St. Paul on 16 June), with Prince on his synthesizer.

At the end of the concert, Prince was once again talkative; besides mentioning Amel Larrieux and The Time again, he also spoke about religion and beliefs, inviting everybody to join an open discussion at 2:00 pm at Paisley Park. He said that Larry Graham would also attend. However, this discussion didn't take place this was happened earlier, without Larry, and just for a selected few. He thanked the audience and said, "Good night, Minneapolis! See you tomorrow." For most fans this was a highlight: finally being able to witness Prince playing in his Paisley Park Studios!

The set list was the following: "The Daisy Chain" (played over the PA with live jamming) / instrumental bass jam: "Thank You (Falletinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" – "777-9311" / "Que Sera Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be)" / instrumental guitar jam: "The Invisible Funk" / "The Payback" / "When You Were Mine" / "Bambi" / "And I Created Woman" (instrumental) / "3 Chains O' Gold" / "Anna St. (instrumental) / "Still Would Stand All Time" / "Delirious."

## 12 June: Afternoon activities

Prince joined the group discussions (between 12:50 pm to 1:20 pm) after *The Rainbow Children* listening sessions, which happened other days. The discussion was professionally filmed by Kevin Smith. Afterwards, Prince invited us to attend his rehearsal at 1:30 pm. Unfortunately, The NPG was nowhere to be seen. Prince announced that we had to wait until his band arrived that, in the meantime, Fonky Bald Heads would rehearse/play us. Neither Prince nor the NPG appeared (again) later in the afternoon, so Prince's open rehearsal was off.

Fonky Bald Heads rehearsed for 20 minutes, from 1:40 to 1:55 pm. They played: "Passin' Your Name" / "Funky Good Time" / "Come And Dance With Me" / "Simon Says" (instrumental) / "Fonky Like A." "Simon Says" is a hip-hop classic, played by DJ Du D. (also known as DJ Dustin) from vinyl over the PA as an intro. "Fonky Like A"; Prince played a short instrumental bit of that track at last year's Celebration concert.

## 12 June: Fonky Bald Heads

Fonky Bald Heads played a 45-minute set, from 9:50 to 10:35 pm. They were augmented by Kip Blackshire, Mike Scott, and The band now fits well together and is much better than last year. This was probably their best performance of the celebration week. The band's CD (and KAJ's former band, TKO's) was on sale at Paisley Park, as well as an extended "official bootleg" single CD with different tracks. The self-titled album includes "Rowdy Mac," a track written with Prince.

Fonky Bald Heads' set included: "Funky Good Time" / "Come And Dance With Me" / "Soundasame" / "Passin' Your Name" / funk number / ballad / "Simon Says" (instrumental) – "Fonky Like A" / "Sex In My Bones" / "Rowdy Mac."

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## The Time

The Time played a 45-minute show, lasting from 11:10 pm to am. Their set was clearly one of the highlights of the week. The act was enthusiastically received by the fans. Terry Lewis guested on a few numbers of the set. Prince guested on keyboards during "Cool," where he also sang the second verse after Morris asked him to do so. Prince came on stage again during the final number, "Jungle Love," playing guitar.

George Clinton appeared onstage at the end of "Fishnet." Morris was positively surprised by this visit. He cleared the stage and let George lead the band through a brilliant funk jam based on "Boo-Boo" inserting chants of "a booty ain't nutting but a butt" and shouts "Send over!" I don't think that Larry Graham was present during this part! The jam lasted well over 10 minutes. Excellent! "Ice Cream Castles" featured a bit of Mazarati's bassline to "100 MPH."

The Time's set was the following: intro / "Oak Tree" / "Jerk" / "Get It Up" / "Cool" (with Prince on keyboards and vocals) / "9311" / "Wild And Loose" / "The Stick" / "Blondie" / "My Drawings" / "Fishnet" (with George Clinton) / "Booty" jam (with George Clinton) / "Gigolos Get Lonely Too" / "If The Kid Can't Make It" / "Ice Cream Castles" – "100 MPH" (instrumental) – "White (chant)" / "The Walk" / "The Bird" / "Jungle Love" (with Prince on guitar).

## 15 June (am): Maceo Parker

Maceo Parker started at 1:45 am and played a set that was unfortunately way too long, lasting nearly three hours and ending at 4:30 am. The audience was already exhausted by the other funk acts. Towards the end of the set it was getting really hot and many attendees were sleepy. In fact, many had already left or were sitting, even lying on the floor. Even the technicians seemed tired and were happy when the "funk attack" finally was over. Najee guested on sax during "Give Up The Funk (Tear The Off The Sucker)," while Prince guested a few numbers later in the set, on "You Can Call Me" (tentative title). Interestingly, Prince came off stage at the end of the number, but as he walked down the stairs in the back of the stage, he heard the first note of "Baby I'm Yours"; he hesitated for a split second if he should stay on stage, then decided to leave. "Stand By Me" was nice, sung a cappella by Maceo and joined by the whole audience. Maceo also sang "Funky Good Time," the second time it was played the same having been the opener of Fonky Bald Heads' set earlier on. Jackwell made a guest drum solo during Maceo's concert.

## 15 June: Erykah Badu

Erykah Badu appeared onstage at 11:55 pm. She played a two-set that ended at 1:55 am. Prince guested on guitar on her last track. Common also guested during a song ("Ghetto Heavy"). Erykah performed an excellent show, which was a mix between a concert and a musical; it was another highlight of the week! She was not just making music, but was acting as well. If you call Prince a divinationist, what do you call her?

## 15 June: Alicia Keys

The fourth night highlighted Alicia Keys and Common. Alicia Keys played from 10:15 to 11:00 pm. Her set included a great rendition of "Come U Don't Call Me Anymore," all alone at the keyboard. Alicia said before playing her closing number, "Someday We'll Be Free" is a (Donny Hathaway) cover that Prince also included in his set a few times on the *Hit N Run* tour in the spring of 1999.

## 15 June: Common

Common's show began at 11:25 pm, lasting until 1:10 am. He played a nice revue of R&B music, often changing clothes and songs to match the different time periods, like the Parliament/Funkadelic "glam" years and the origins of hip-hop in the Bronx. He was very funny and entertaining. His band was also excellent, very tight. Erykah guested on the same track in his set as he did the night before on hers. Prince first guested to play keyboards

welcome 2 PRINCE A CELEBRATION  
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PARK SCHEDULE JUNE 11-17, 2001

PA	10am-11:30am	Listening sessions 4 "The Rainbow Children"
	11:30am-1pm	Group Discussions
	1pm-4pm	Open House (Activities posted daily. Day Passholders allowed in)
	2pm (rehearsals)	Purple Movies in the NPG Music Club room
monday		Under The Cherry Moon
tuesday		Sign O' The Times
Wednesday		Purple Rain
Thursday		Graffiti Bridge
Fri & Sat		
Sunday		

Performances in the Park followed by Afterparties

11pm (except Fri & Sat)	AMELLARIEUX & Purple Movie Circle Band
Monday	The Minneapolis Sound featuring
Tuesday	THE TIME & THE FUNKY BALDHEADS
Wednesday	ERYKAH BADU
Thursday	COMMON & ALICIA KEYS
Friday & Sat	PRINCE & THE NPG at the Xcel Energy Center
Sunday	followed by the Afterparty in Paisley Park
	NIKKA COSTA

Absolutely NO cameras, recorders, or cellphones allowed in the building at any time.

"Loose" and "Sex Machine." Later on in the set, together with Kip, he joined Common again on vocals for "The Light."

## 15 and 16 June: Prince concerts at Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul

Although Prince has a much better band than last year, the two Xcel Energy Center concerts were not as exciting as last year's Northrop show. The first night was a regular, uninteresting *Hit N Run* concert off the shelf. The second night was much more interesting, but still lacked some highlights and surprises compared to last year (old band members, unexpected special guests). Also, there were no new songs; he just played the greatest hits, generally in the same arrangements since 1996 or even earlier. Why not try something new with all the fans in town? The soundchecks and concerts are covered in detail in our tour report.

## 15 June: Fifth party night

It was pretty chaotic outside the Park. They had announced the afterparty over the PA after the Xcel Energy Center show, so there was a big turnout of people. However, there was no organization whatsoever, so people with passes stood in line along with people without passes, while other pass-holders just walked past the line to upfront. It took the security team some energy, to get the single line divided into two separate lines (pass holders and the others). However, once inside there was just a regular party, without any live event. Prince appeared at the DJ booth at around 1:25 am and sang a bit live over the studio versions of "Housequake" and other tracks that were played over the PA.

## 16 June: Sixth party night

Same announcement after the show as the night before, but this time the security staff had prepared two lines. Again, there was no live event. They showed concert footage from the second Xcel Energy show, from "Little Red Corvette" up to "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker."

## 17 June: Nikka Costa

The final concert of the week was by Nikka Costa, who played a rocking and energetic hour-long concert, from 11:30 pm to 12:50 am. Unfortunately, her set was marred by technical problems. The whole sound system blew up two times, but the concert went on and you could only hear some music over the monitor speakers on stage. During a break between songs, Nikka jokingly asked, "Is there a New Power Generator in the house?" The sound quality was worse than during the previous shows because they didn't have the complete system back from Prince's Xcel Energy Center shows.

## 18 June (am): Prince's closing speech

At about 3:00 am, Prince appeared at the Paisley Park DJ booth

Front and back of a card that visitors received upon entering the celebration.

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## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebration

### BBQ

Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 11:00AM @ Lake Ann Park

sented By: Jeff C., Kerry C., Bobby, Chris & Karrie, Dave, Clay, Tamiko, Jeff D, and Alan D.

bring your own Food & Drinks, and we'll bring the FUNK!

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS ON THE BACK

An invitation to a barbecue.

sincere and honest. He thanked the crowd for the wonderful week and touched on the problem of the artistic rights and his solution, the NPGMC. He indicated that the Celebration would probably take place every year and for the first time acknowledged that even a workaholic needs some sleep. Here follows most of Prince's speech with audience comments in brackets. "When Doves Cry" is playing over the PA when he begins.

"So look here, talk to me. Should we do this every year? Which was your favourite band...? [You, Prince!]. No, no, no, no, no! Erykah Badu? Kinda right, eh? What about Common? Yeah! Amel Larrieux, did y'all see her? Nikka Costa tonight? Sorry about the sound system, we gonna kill somebody tomorrow. Don't worry about this y'all, you'll read about it in the *Star And Tribune*. Did you come out for the discussions during the week? Some of you, yes? Very heavy stuff. We're working on a documentary, we'll release it pretty soon, it's about 'the rainbow children,' which I think all of you belong to." ("When Doves Cry" stops; no more music).

"We have to start thinking about ourselves as more than just black and white and rich/poor, man/woman. We have to think about ourselves as children of God, all of us. And from the bottom of my heart I really wanna thank you for coming out and sharing this time with us, because... You're all so appreciative, but you have no idea what it does for me, when I got to sit and talk with all of you about the things that all of us. And it really helps me in my plea to do the best possible work that I can, and try to stay in tune with you. And that's hard when you are in the music business and they tell you what a hit is and what you have to put onto records, and all that kinda stuff. And what we're trying to do is break down the boundaries that separate all of us."

"Musicians, over time, have been robbed and pillaged and stolen from, you can get any history book and read about the origins of the record business, and you can see that they didn't really know where they were, most of the musicians. Like for example Jimi Hendrix's first record was already dope, he didn't need anybody to 'make' him. What happens is you get a lot of guys who say 'we made you, we did this for you, we did that for you' – and then when somebody like Jimi Hendrix wants to rebel, then, chaos ensues and the war starts. And I'm an extension of him, I'm an extension of Little Richard, an extension of James Brown, and all those people. And by no means do I say that to be arrogant or anything like that, but what we're trying to do is break down the walls that separated the truth from the lie. Curtis Mayfield died without ownership of his master recordings. After he died, his family fought very hard to regain those rights back. Same with Jimi Hendrix. What I'm trying to do is do it in my lifetime – and I can do it with your help! When we ask 'how many of you are willing to do the work?' what we mean is join the club and show that there can be an alternative for the music business that we're all sick and tired off!"

"You like the Fonky Bald Heads? It's a brand new band and if you support them they never have to sign and give their kingdom away. That means, you all get to share their kingdom. You are just as much part of The NPG as they are, so if you support them and if you support what it is that I'm doing then we can do this every year, on and on, forever and ever, and ever. So, once again thank

you and it's been a long week so I'm gonna go home and try to get some sleep, rest my leg and see if I can get back... [How's your leg?] It's alright, it's doing much better [Prince, thank you for your open house, it was marvellous!]. All my pleasure, brother, it's all yours! Peace to you all. Thank you, goodnight." ("Peace" plays over the PA).

About 15 minutes later, while the last song of the night was played over the PA ("Goodbye"), the audience was asked to exit the building. The Celebration 2001 was over.

### Observations

This time, all concerts took place in the bigger Soundstage room instead of the Love 4 One Another room (now re-baptized the "NPG Music Club room"), where the parties took place at the last celebration. Spotted guests in attendance (besides the invitees who performed) included: Michael Bland, Damon Dickson, Larry Graham, and Levi Seacer Jr. Prince's Paisley Park security staff was supported by Asia Security, a local security firm that also works at the Xcel Energy Center. Prince's people could focus on the organisation of the activities and other important questions. Thus, the whole event was smoother and more relaxed.

They scheduled to show the Prince movies in the NPGMC room in the afternoons. However, on the 14th they changed the programme and showed *Prince & The Revolution Live!* (Syracuse 1985). In the evening, they often showed the *Rave Inz The Year 2000* live video. The only notable and "unseen" footage was a part of the second Xcel Energy concert, shown at the afterparty the same evening. The only unreleased and "rare" songs played over the PA by DJ Dudley D. (besides "The Rainbow Children") were complete versions of "My Medallion," "High," and "Vavoom," as well as the instrumental five-minute "Mad" with the "Be Bop To Hip Hop" extended portion (which was heavily played last year). The three new tracks were played from CD-Rs. Interestingly, "The Work – Pt. 1" was played from a vinyl test pressing.

There was no garage sale like last year. They featured a lot of clothing, some posters and jewellery. Musically, there was the *Rave Inz The Joy Fantastic* special CD (with a printing error on the inlay) for \$15, the *Rave* video and DVD (the latter for \$20), all the new *Hit N Run* CD singles except for "Peace" for \$5 apiece, *Goldnigga*, TKO and the Fonky Bald Heads CDs, and a real rarity, the MPLS CD (featuring the 12-inch mix and "The Ryde Dyvine"), which sold out within minutes. Collectors had to be alert all the time; you never knew when they would put something new up. You had to check out the store several times a day. Only listening session attendees on the first days got a reprint of the *The Rainbow Children* cover in letter-size format. Attendees of the last few days were able to pick up a poster of the same picture. They were just randomly given away.

### Flashback to "A Celebration" 2000

During one night of last year's Celebration, Prince went up to the DJ booth and played the following tracks: "Kiss – Xtended Version" (new master; cool, just the extended portion) / "Hit U In The Socket" (Rosie Gaines) / "Splash" / "Peace" / "Y Should Eye Do That,



From left to right: Walker Art Sculpture ("Under the Cherry Spoon"), outside the gates to the famous purple house, Brother Jules' new store, the Excel Energy Center in St. Paul ("Prince" is visible on the marquee in the top left corner of the building), and a building in the Uptown area of Minneapolis. Photos by Joanne Merry (thanks to Kathy Jentz).

# Celebration Highlights

by Kathy Jentz

"HIGH" IS THE SONG I WANT TO JAM TO EVERY DAY and night and it is killing me that we still don't have the full version available. It was bliss to have the DJ spin it every night but one for us at Paisley. Prince certainly looked like he got a kick out of watching us dance to it. Prince, when are you going to release it?!

The one night DJ Dudley D. did not play it. I asked him why the hell not. He looked sheepish and explained it was beyond his control. That there is only one copy of the new singles – he actually showed me the discs – they are studio pressings. He said that Prince brings them to him every night and tells him what to play, then takes them home with him every night. Dudley has very little, if any, control over what is played at those parties. Which leads me to my biggest highlight of the week...

## Encounters

On one of the final party nights, DJ Dudley D. introduced a new song by Prince performed by Kip and DVS. Up until that point the dancefloor had been filled with happy faces and gyrating bodies. As soon as that forlorn sounding single came on the party screeched to a halt and everyone started milling about looking for someone to talk to or taking a bathroom break. At this point, I was walking towards the water table to buy a bottle when I saw fast movement to my right. I looked up just in time to see Prince running from the backroom door towards the DJ booth. "Excuse me," he loudly exclaimed as he busted between a hugging couple flew right past me. His bodyguards were trailing behind but did not catch up to him until he reached the DJ booth, where Prince had jerked the single off the player and was giving Dudley the riot act. I'm not sure whose idea it was to play that single, but I don't think we'll hear it again anytime soon.

I think only the busted-apart couple, myself, and maybe two, three others ever saw what happen. The rest of the room were just commenting on what a horrible DJ we had and when was the music going to restart. I'll never forget Prince's expression as he flew across that floor...

The next night I had a similar encounter when I was leaning on some railing near the video players, just chilling out waiting for a song I felt the need to dance to. I felt these hands wrap around my waist and myself being literally picked up and moved about a half foot to my left. I was startled and turned immediately to see who would have the audacity to do that when I was face-to-face with Prince. My jaw dropped. He gave me a long slow grin then dropped down to the VCR behind me to throw out the tape currently playing and put in the Excel Energy show.

I stood where I was and watched the portion of the show on the projection screen, while he stayed down by the VCR and then ducked out later behind the DJ booth. The bodyguard never left his post by the tape in the VCR. Smart move.

## Relaxed

Comparing notes with others after the Celebration, I found out I was not the only one who to have a "moving" experience around Prince. A few others told me very similar stories of how he placed a hand on a hip and asked them to let him pass or said excuse me with a hand on shoulder or arm.

This is a very different and much more relaxed man than what we saw at the Celebration in 2000. I think his one-on-one and group chats throughout the week with the fans really helped him, and us, see that everyone is human and no one needs to crowd up on him or scream at seeing him pass or otherwise act like psychos.

One of the definite highlights of this trip and last year's was getting together with all the other Celebration attendees. The BayNPG again hosted their fam picnic at Lake Anne and promised to do so at every future event. Paisley Park should really make this part of their official events. Judging by the after-reports I was sent, it



# Relaxed and Heated

by JSeven

FROM THE GET-GO, THINGS SEEMED MORE RELAXED this year at the Park than last year. No extended lines to get your laminated pass, no Minneapolis TV stations interviewing fans standing in line. Instead of last year's "Paisley tour," you were allowed free reign to go where you wanted. This was an improvement as you could lounge in places for as long as you wished. The house was open from 10 am until 4 pm although as the week progressed, Paisley was opening after 11 am.

As you entered Paisley, if you are going to one of the listening discussion groups, security would punch a hole in your laminated pass. Ninety per cent of the time, if your pass was punched on the right-hand side by the VIP mark, you would have the discussion with a Paisley employee. If your pass was punched on the lower left-hand corner, you were going to have a discussion with Prince after *The Rainbow Children* CD was played.

## Hallways

The piano used during the *Rave Unz The Year 2000* performance was set up past the first hallway, right where the Oprah Winfrey interview was taped. There were a few fancy chairs around the piano where people would just lounge around. Directly in front of this area was the kitchen, which was off-limits to fans. A videotape with the words "High" was spotted around there earlier in the week.

There were two other hallways where platinum and gold records would be as well various awards Prince has received over the years. The records that stuck out the most were the *Come* record, which was presented to Mayte, and *The Time*'s first record, which was given to Prince under the name Jarnie Starr.

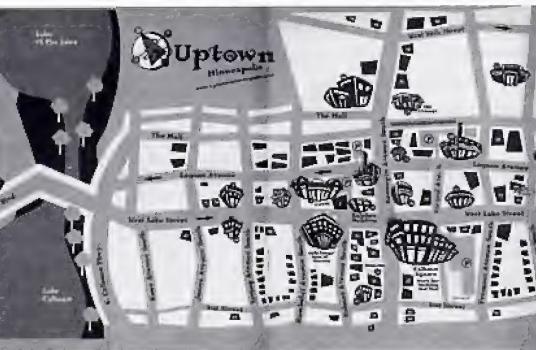
The hallways led to studios A, B, and C. Sometimes studio C would be locked, other times opened. Most of the time, people would be relaxing on chairs in there or just walking around absorbing everything. You had total access to check out the soundboards and look at the picture of Prince's father directly behind the console.

After walking aimlessly, you could take the left hallway past pictures of Prince from different eras, to the back end of Paisley Park, where the entrance to the NPG Store was set up. Or you could walk into the performance stage room where his outfits from over the years were hanging against the left curtained wall. If you decided to walk back to the piano lounge room, you could walk right down another hallway, which had a few more platinum records and restrooms. Past those was another room set up with two couches and a glass table. If you decided not to go into the room, you could take a right turn, down another hallway, which would lead you to the Soundstage where the outfits were set up.

The second floor of Paisley, which can be accessed by the piano lounge, consists of Prince's game room, where some discussions were held. Also on the second floor are Prince's two doves, the weight room, Larry Graham's office, and Prince's meeting room. As for the building Prince is developing about 30 feet from Paisley, it is oval shaped and has concrete steps leading up to the church-like doors. The building looked half-completed and may change by time it is finished.

## First day (11 June)

Discussion groups took place in the morning and afternoon and while Prince was rehearsing rounds from



A map of the Uptown area, including Calhoun Square.

is one of the fondest remembered and most emotional of the events taking place that week.

Speaking of non-official events, my friends and I made time during our days for a side-trip to see DJ's Music Emporium as well as Minneapolis sightseeing at Minnehaha Falls, Calhoun Square, and the Walker Sculpture Garden. These were some of my best memories from the trip.

If Paisley got really organized we could do these local tourist things – including visiting all the Purple meccas (dad's house, high school site, etc) – as group trips. After you did the listening session, most of the days at Paisley were pretty non-eventful and anti-climatic. If it wasn't for volunteer-host Damon D. (ex-NPG member) keeping the party going single-handed, the days at Paisley would be a real lost cause.

It wasn't fun at the time, but will truly last in my memory – that hail storm on Monday evening. It trapped us in the hotel parking lot. We were stuck in our rental car having just come from stocking up at the local grocery store. Large ice-rocks raining down all around us was a quite a way for us to kick off the week and one we won't soon forget!

## Acts

I'm not a big follower of rap music so enjoying Common's performance was one of the real highlights of the week for me. My friends all laughed at me because I had said, "I'll go stand at the front by the stage for just the first few songs and then come back and join you." Well, I never did join them – once his show started I was glued upfront and not even the funky-smelling couple could make me budge.

After his show, many attendees I talk to were most impressed with his on-the-spot rap riffs about Prince and Paisley Park. Many of which he repeated during the Xcel Energy encore on Saturday night.

My current favourite Prince-related artists are Fonky Bald Heads, so you know I had a good time getting to party with a few of them all week and here them perform a few more times. They are truly growing a new sound together.

Every night at Paisley, a professional film crew was set up with dolly track and everything in front of the performance stage. Usually they filmed the first three to four songs of that evening's act, which almost always included a guest spot by Prince. Then they broke down the whole set-up and moved all the equipment to the sidewall of the Soundstage. This made me happy as it helped me since a big space was opened up at the front of the stage to watch the rest of the live act each night.

One night, I think Wednesday, the film crew took footage of the dancers on the floor for a few songs. Everyone really turned it out for the cameras, so it should be some nice stuff. Most of us assumed this was part of Kevin Smith's documentary. However, Smith was never

hoping this footage sees the light of day, but one never knows.

## Discussions

I can't let this highlight reel run out until I talk about the listening session and post-discussion my friends and I attended on Tuesday. Like many others who got the chance to preview *The Rainbow Children*, I found the music enticing but the lyrics heavy-handed. But it may grow on me – other Prince creations have – it's hard to judge from just one listen. So I'll leave it at that.

After our first listen, about 25 of us were taken back to the atrium area and we sat down while Kevin Smith led a discussion on the album. The subject hardly left Jehovah Witness-centred topics, unfortunately. When Kevin tried to steer it away to more general religion or spiritual tracks, someone always managed to get it back to JW. This was testing the patience of many in the room and I think many would have left, if Prince had not entered.

He tried to be a listener in the discussion, but Kevin asked him to join in. Prince walked over and sat on the piano bench next to my group and I got my first look of him up close and in full sunlight. Got to say the man looks great and healthy as ever. He confessed he'd just rolled out of bed with no breakfast and came right over when he heard we were chatting.

We never did discuss the storm as he'd promised at the show the night prior, but he did clarify a few things. Here are a few points I found new and surprising:

- *The Rainbow Children* will be released only online. It is up to us to burn CDs, create art, and get it out to those not online or non-fams. He said he did not care if this album made no money. He just wanted it released.

- He confessed that he had never heard of disco until he had finished his first album for Warner Bros. And they asked him to make his second one more commercial. "Haven't you heard of disco and what's going on in music?" they asked him. This was said to illustrate his point that Minneapolis radio was dead and behind the times during his upbringing and he had lived a "sheltered" musical life until that point.

- One fan asked if he would release all his concerts on video. Prince said he thought that would flood the market and be too much of him. All in attendance interjected, "No!" The fan explained that the die-hards have everything and want more. That we would buy every show and that he should do as other bands are and have order forms at the shows to get the tapes sent post-show. Prince looked genuinely surprised at the idea. He'd evidently never been presented with this prospect. He asked if we all thought it was a good concept. And we all chimed, "Yes, duh!" I can only hope this line of questioning stuck with him and we'll see more new product coming our way soon.

## Ending

Too bad the week ended on such a low-note. Nikka's performance was ruined by sound problems but further disappointing was knowing that an "all-star jam" was planned as the cap-off event for the Celebration and seeing that it would not be. It was painful to see the special guests including Tommy Barbarella and other ex-NPG members standing in the side-VIP area and knowing we missed out on what surely would have been a legendary treat. I know the guest musicians were just as disappointed as I'm sure Prince himself was.

The fact the Prince came himself to say the final goodbye was a pleasant surprise. I believe he felt he needed to make one last positive connection. It was much

the afternoon listening party were let into the Soundstage area. During the rehearsal break, Prince asked what people thought of the new album. Prince seemed to be taken aback by people's views and by not having all the answers to certain questions that were asked. This may have been the reason why all other discussion groups, aside from one on Tuesday morning, included Larry Graham. After Prince left, his guitar technician passed out some guitar picks to fans still hanging around.

A bad tornado hit Chanhassen and we were told outside that Amel Larrieux would not be able to make it. Instead, Prince would perform. His equipment was still set up from the afternoon rehearsal and technicians were making sure that the guitars were tuned. Around 10:30 pm, though, the equipment was slowly taken down and the word was that Amel was able to catch a later flight and would be at Paisley later to perform.

Amel took the stage shortly after 1:00 am and performed for a little over an hour. She thanked Prince for having her and performed her hit "Tell Me" that she made with the group Groove Theory.

After her performance, Prince's equipment was set up again and after 3 am in the morning Prince took the stage as "The Daisy Chain" was playing on the PA. Most of the songs performed would end up in Saturday's Excel Energy Center show, aside from a few covers. After the performance was over, Prince talked candidly about religion, the new CD and the storm. The performance lasted about 45 minutes.

## Second day (12 June)

Prince held an afternoon discussion that was filmed by director Kevin Smith. He would film several other discussion groups throughout the week. Fonky Bald Heads held an open rehearsal later in the afternoon.

Fonky Bald Heads' concert was their best performance yet. They got the crowd very much into it. Later in the night, Kirk Johnson and DVS plus other members made themselves available to talk with fans. They were also on hand the rest of the week.

Just before The Time took the stage, John Blackwell made his way through to the front of the stage to chill with the fans and watch The Time take over. Prince joined in on "Cool," even singing a verse. Prince and Morris were smiling and it was obvious that memories from the past were shining through both of them; it seemed as if they were flashing back to the past of being high school buddies.

George Clinton later took the stage, much to the surprise of Morris and Jerome who were all smiles. Bets were being taken all week who was going to break the no-cuss rule first. The smart money was on The Time, but George beat them to it by proclaiming "shit" and then covering his mouth quickly after saying it. George shrugged his shoulders in an "oh well" kind of manner and went into his "booty ain't nuthin' but a butt" anthem. The Time took over again, fully aware that they were kicking some major booty. Prince then joined them for "Jungle Love," playing guitar by the side of the stage.

Unlike The Time's Studio 54 show on December 31st 1998, where Prince took centre stage during his guest spots, Prince seemed to lay low so The Time could have the spotlight. The Time didn't perform any new songs. It would make sense if they incorporated "Prettyman" into their act. After all, it was originally written for Morris and Prince isn't playing it.

Following The Time, Maceo Parker took the stage. He was joined by Prince for one song. Maceo played until he ran out of songs, nearly three hours. By that time, Prince was already out of Paisley to get some rest.

## Third day (13 June)

A two-hour plus discussion was held in the game room that was filmed. Those that attended felt it was rather one-sided as Larry Graham would cut off people in mid-sentence to express his points of views on the questions.

Erykah Badu took the stage shortly before midnight. During the second song, the crowd started to cheer loudly. Miss Badu turned round to see what they were cheering for and there came Prince dressed in lime green, playing guitar.

During her set, Badu said, "Elders, is it OK I say something? I had a dream of the future, that I stood in front of a bunch of people from all different races. People from all different religious backgrounds. And we were all able to be cool with one another." She went on a little longer, but the message was well received by everyone as the crowd cheered and a few Amens were heard. The people who felt *The Rainbow Children* album had an agenda that was being forced on them rejoiced in Badu's message of complete togetherness.

## Fourth day (14 June)

More discussions were held with Prince and Larry Graham. One of the more heated ones of the week took place in the early afternoon. One woman was having a very heated conversation with Larry. The only problem with this was that it took away from others who might have had their own questions to ask Prince and Larry. One person brought up that Prince maybe should read all the bibles before choosing the right religion to follow. The person let Prince know that he has read a few and wished to continue reading more. Prince seemed to ponder this thought for a few minutes and said that it was not a bad idea at all.

The later afternoon session, which lasted nearly three hours, featured a group from the Bay Area in California, one of Prince's strongest fan bases in the US. Prince reportedly seemed more relaxed and took more questions this time. After the discussion was over, Prince and Larry had a private conversation with a few people who still had questions that could not be answered during the discussion. The conversation got really emotional towards the end and continued behind closed doors for at least another hour.

Alicia Keys, whose CD had yet to be released at the time, put on an excellent performance. The highlight was her rendition of "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore" which featured Prince's voice at the end on a cell phone saying "hello?" as Alicia hung up. *Blender* magazine from the US reported after the show that all Prince wanted to do was talk to Alicia's drummer who could not be found.

The set was close to 45 minutes in length. Common took the stage about a half hour later. Common is not a flashy hip-hopper but spends his talent showcasing his lyrical ability and his rhyming skills. During the performance, he was joined by Erykah Badu. Later on, Common led a "happy birthday" chant for Prince, but the crowd seemed a little scared to join in. Guess they were expecting someone to get mad...

After the Paisley performances and music ended, several people from the Bump Squad (Los Angeles) and The Dream Factory (Bay Area) had their own discussions about *The Rainbow Children* CD at the Chanhassen Inn, where most of the members were staying. These conversations lasted past sunrise.

## Fifth day (15 June)

Although there were discussions today, none were conducted by Prince or Larry. As usual, the groups were

divided. Many loved the CD but others had sor- tions that could not be answered.

After a most regular *Hit N Run* show at the Energy Center, a Paisley Party was held and was flooded with people. No performances except for behind the DJ booth for a little while. Concert of the San Diego show earlier in April was shown.

## Sixth day (16 June)

Discussions were held and this time Prince also joined in. A banishment game was played where people were asked a question and if it was a wrong answer, they had to sit on the other side of the room. The game was played for a while.

After a much better Excel Energy Center performance than the night before, the flood began again at Paisley Park. No performance again, but Maceo played along to "Prettyman" behind the DJ booth. Footage from earlier in the night was shown. Two songs from *The Rainbow Children* CD were also played.

## Seventh day (17 June)

While people were standing in line, Prince and John L. Nelson was leaving Paisley Park. There for days that Prince would play after Nikka Costa's performance never happened. Nikka Costa's performance took about 10 minutes before midnight. Nikka came out in her pants hanging half off her ass, showing her plumper butt.

Aside from the cheeky performance, Nikka Costa's guitar was at the left hand side of the stage (audience's right). Several times the guitar was picked up but was later put back as Prince never came out to perform with her. The sound cut out twice during her performance, making some in the audience yell "Nikka, we feel you, we just can't hear you!" It seems at times you can see Janis Joplin's spirit somewhere in that girl.

Later in the night, the power at Paisley Park shut off for about five minutes so there was no light anywhere. Prince came out at the end of the night and made a rousing speech where he said an extension of Jimi, of James, of Little Richard and others that came before him and said his fight over is to gain them back in his lifetime. He asked if he could do this every year and of course the answer was yes. The night and week was capped off nicely as fans thanked Prince for this opportunity and Prince said it was his pleasure.

## Overview

First and foremost, things ran much smoother this year. Having the concerts in the main Soundstage was a no-brainer and was well appreciated. Everything was more relaxed this year as members of The Time just relax and chat with fans. Former members of other groups made special appearances, much to the delight of others who did not expect to meet or see them in this kind of setting. Security had things in control, there were many around so there were no major problems at all.

Prince flowed more freely around Paisley Park, times stopping to talk with certain people he knew that had been in his discussions. Prince was lovable to enjoy himself, either it was onstage, or behind the soundboard with his woman. In fact, he seemed to be enjoying himself just as much as we were.

One problem though is that we there for the week and it would be nicer to hear more Prince music less stuff that is played at clubs in our hometowns are so many wonderful bands that are



Park that could be played during these kind of events. Tracks like "Vavoom," "High," and a rare mix of "Hot Wit U" (from the yet to be released "Hot Experience") were nice but only a handful of tracks does not make up for hearing "let me blow your mind" five times a night. Hopefully, next year, Prince will take this into account and give the fans what they want: more of his music and less of the others.

As for the concerts, hopefully when/if Prince tours again, more new songs will be played. How can you promote the NPGMC, which releases new songs, if you are not playing them in concert? And you would think without any radio or video play, Prince would use live performances to showcase new material.

The fans made this celebration a success. Prince and his musical guests brought people an experience they will not soon forget. Other artists are already planning their own kinds of celebrations, but again, Prince was one step ahead of the game.

Top left: the New Power New York gathering.  
Bottom left: Walker Art Sculpture Garden, "Diamonds and Pearls."  
Right: "Prince: A Celebration" VIP pass and laminates from the LoveSexy DC and New Power New York fan groups.  
Photos by Joanne Merry (thanks to Kathy Jentz).

# Going To Mecca, Losing My Religion

by Randy Reiss

I'VE BEEN A DEVOTED FAN OF PRINCE since my senior year of high school, when I got my first car and *Lovesexy's* "Alphabet St." spurred me to load up on his catalog so I'd have some decent cruising music. Then I got my hands on a pirated copy of the *Black Album* and the deal was closed: I would follow this artist through hell or high water. As it turned out, I would also end up following him through a lot more than that (name changes, label battles, spotty albums), all the way up to today as a paying Premium member of his NPG Music Club.

As a club member, I was invited to "Prince: A Celebration – The Rainbow Children," a gathering of the faithful at Paisley Park in Chanhassen, Minnesota this past June 11–18. For \$70, I could take a self-guided tour of Prince's legendary studio complex during the day and attend intimate concerts at the Park featuring artists like Erykah Badu, Common, Maceo Parker and Nikka Costa at night. Prince also scheduled two arena-sized concerts for that weekend which required separate admission. NPG Music Club members were given the VIP treatment throughout the week and the chance to listen to and discuss Prince's new album, *The Rainbow Children*. With two unused airline tickets burning a hole in my pocket, it didn't take too much arm twisting for me and my wife to decide to make the trip out from San Francisco for a weekend of fun and music; a trip we viewed very much as a pilgrimage to our own personal Mecca.

It was certainly a more, uh, *interesting* trip than I anticipated. I really wasn't prepared to be so awe struck as I sat in the studios where so many of my favourite albums *Sign O' The Times*, *Emancipation* were recorded. The people I met were uniformly engaging and fun to trade trivia with. Friday's arena concert was a bit hampered by sound problems and a hurt leg – and the fact

that I'd seen basically the same show twice before. Saturday's show, however, was off-the-hook as Prince led his incredibly tight band through the usual hits but also rarities like "Bambi," "Sometimes It Snows In April," "Free" and "Three Chains O' Gold."

## Listening session

On Sunday, I went to the last listening session for *The Rainbow Children*. The scouting reports I got from other fans who listened to it earlier in the week weren't encouraging. They said musically it was pretty good but lyrically it was a heavy-handed concept album inspired by Prince's recent studies with Jehovah's Witnesses. As I sat on an overstuffed couch outside Paisley Park's Soundstage, I was horrified to hear that they were not leading me astray.

*The Rainbow Children* was indeed 70 minutes of engaging funk, rock, R&B ballads and even some jazz-fusion. Taken separately, the James Brown-like "The Work – Pt. 1" and the ballads "Mellow" and "She Loves Me 4 Me" are outstanding tracks. The overall concept and the lyrics, however, weren't anything I'd want to listen to more than once or twice. It tells the tale of the Wise One whose family and loved ones are tempted by the Distractor and his minions. This happens and then that happens (the plot twists aren't that interesting) and then The Rainbow Children ascend to a higher level of consciousness by living under the word of God, leaving the Banished Ones behind while they party on in Heaven.

Unfortunately, a lot of this story is told by an annoying narrator in a super-slowed down voice, not unlike the demonic voice in "Bob George." There's also a lot of race baiting ("Holocaust aside/many lived and died/but when the truth is told/Would U rather be dead or be sold?") that just doesn't jive with the album's message of coming together under the word of God. I mean, both slavery and the holocaust were horrible, reprehensible things— what good does it do to compete to see which was worse? In the end, *The Rainbow Children* ends up playing more like a sermon than a story, and it really offended me more than once. For the record, it also made me bob my head and tap my feet.

## "Do you believe in God?"

Each listening session was followed by a group discussion about what was just played, with some of the sessions filmed by Kevin Smith (the filmmaker responsible for *Clerks* and *Dogma*) for a documentary. By most accounts, the first discussion went South when not everyone was enthused with the album's message of getting an "accurate understanding of God" or getting left behind. In sessions later in the week, Prince and/or pioneering funk bassist (and Jehovah's Witness) Larry Graham joined in to talk about their beliefs and to answer questions.

The discussions sometimes went on for hours, with Prince asking, for example, "Do you believe in God?" If you answered no, he asked you to step to the other side of the room, and then he would start a discussion about why they were wrong. Then another question, another division, another discussion about why they were wrong. A lot of people I spoke with were very put off by this, yet found it hard to object with the object of their fandom sitting inches away, talking with them like they'd always dreamed of. In the end, he always tried to unite the group back as one, but the damage was usually done.

Ultimately, I decided the best course of action was to skip my discussion session. In my life, I've found that heated discussions about religion and politics convert no one and piss off every one. *The Rainbow Children* had upset me enough – I wasn't relishing the opportunity to have Prince make me stand in the corner with a religious dunce cap on my head.

Prince has had a rough few years, with his label battles, death of his child and annulled marriage. I will never begrudge a person for where their faith and where they find their strength in times of need. This is why I'm willing to give Prince a little room on this one. I won't, however, stand for someone not giving me that same respect, which is what I came away with from my trip to Mecca. That was me on the airplane, losing my religion, both in the sense of being angry and in the sense of accepting that a man who has shaped a lot of my philosophical views has moved on. Maybe some day, like fellow Minnesota music genius Bob Dylan, he'll swing back and we can meet in the middle. That's what I'm praying for.



# Rainbow Children, It's Time 2 Rise

Prince's new album, *The Rainbow Children*, was previewed for fans at listening parties during the "Prince: A Celebration" days in June 2001. The album generated disparate reactions amongst the fans; some claimed it was a musical masterpiece, while others felt it was unfocused. The lyrics caused a great deal of controversy because of the overt religious content and prevalent Jehovah's Witness influences. The album will be released in October to NPG Music Club members. In this feature, Jseven discusses the contents of the album and David Magdziarz examines the lyrics.

PRINCE EMBARKED ON *THE RAINBOW CHILDREN* PROJECT some time in the late summer of 2000 after he had wrapped up work on the *High* album. Most of the tracks feature John Blackwell on drums and since he joined Prince's band on September 2nd 2000 this likely means that the bulk of *The Rainbow Children* sessions were held in the autumn of 2000. The Hornheads added horns to five of the tracks in early February 2001, indicating that the album was finished when Prince hit the road in mid-April with the *Hit N Run* tour.

The album lasts approximately 68 minutes and contains the following tracks:

- 1) "The Rainbow Children"
- 2) Segue
- 3) "Muse 2 The Pharaoh"
- 4) "Family Name"
- 5) "The Work – Pt. 1"
- 6) "Everywhere"
- 7) Segue
- 8) "Mellow"
- 9) "The Sensual Everafter"
- 10) "1+1+1=3"
- 11) "She Loves Me 4 Me"
- 12) "Mirror Mirror"
- 13) "The Everlasting Now"
- 14) "Come 2gether As 1"

The CD continues after "Come 2gether As 1," but the tracks from 15 to 20 each contain five seconds of dead air, leading up to track 21 where the CD player screen has the text 111 run across it, presumably referring to "1 + 1 + 1 = 3."

## "The Rainbow Children"

The title track, which is nearly seven minutes in length, opens up the album with a return of an all-too-familiar voice, Bob George/ Spooky Electric, this time so slowed down that if it were not for the lyric book, you would not be able to make out what he is saying. The voice states that "with the accurate understanding of God and His law they went about the work of building a new nation: The Rainbow Children. The Wise One who understood the law that was handed down from God long ago reflected the true meaning to his woman every day and she surrendered her discerning of it into his care and keeping for she trusted he would lead her the right way. Her children in subjection to her, she in subjection to the Wise One, and the wise one in subjection to the only begotten one, all forever in subjection to God."

Three voices follow, that of Prince, one male voice, and a female voice. They form a choir, singing together, "Just like the sun, the Rainbow Children rise, flying upon the wings of the New Translation. See them fly, fly, the covenant will be kept this time. Just like the sun, the Rainbow Children rise, Rainbow Children, it's time to rise!" Propelled by a fast walking bassline and live drumming, the music has a distinct jazzy flavour reminiscent of many Madhouse tracks. The music is upbeat and energetic, but sort of rambling and somewhat repetitious.

The Bob George voice returns one more time and the lyrics stay religious throughout the track, setting the tone for the entire album. He asks you to question who your real father is. Despite the originality of the music and the religious nature of the lyrics, a problem with this track is the inclusion of lyrics from "Sexuality," "Reproduction of

the new breed leader, stand up and organize!" Clearly, Prince is trying to let us know that he has been speaking of this since 1981, but in reality Prince believed in a different kind of God then, which makes the recycling of his old lyrics irrelevant. In fact, it tarnishes what the open-minded Prince of then symbolized and what the more dogmatic Prince of now is trying to establish.

The song continues back into the chorus and then fades away into the Bob George voice, "The Wise One who understood the law that was handed down from God long ago, held fast in his belief that the Lord would bring him another one who loved him so." The segue after the title track is less than three minutes long, featuring Prince playing his electric guitar smoothly and slowly.

### "Muse 2 The Pharaoh"

This is a slow soul track with spiritual overtones flowing freely everywhere. Lyrics include, "If she could be Muse to the Pharaoh, then one day she might be Queen." Prince uses innuendo like only he can by stating, "With the ebony milk of her thighs. If she could be Muse and let him decide. Perhaps she'll let him decide." Prince later speaks of the future that is in her belly (a woman who is pregnant). He quotes from scripture by stating, "And if the Proverb of the 31 and verse 10 becomes the song she sings again and again." For some reason, he also points out that the opposite of "NATO" is "OTAN."

It seems that a woman to Prince, or the person he is speaking for in the song, is below that of a man and can only be his Queen if he so picks her to be his Pharaoh, then and *only* then will she be treated royally. While the music is top-notch, the lyrics will be quite bothersome for many. Prince may have objectified women in the past, and most women might look past these lyrics as somewhat romantic, but if you look closely enough, he is more or less talking down to the woman because he has to hip her to his agenda.

However, the most disturbing thing about "Muse 2 the Pharaoh" are these lines, "Holocaust aside, many lived and died, but when all truth be told would you rather be dead or be sold?" Prince is basically comparing the

Holocaust to the slavery that African-Americans have faced. The comparison of the suffering of Jews and African-Americans has often been criticized as simplistic. Prince should have delved more into the subject instead of just mentioning it casually and moving on.

### "Family Name"

Lasting about three minutes, this track has a flowing Andreas Vollenweider-flavoured vibe and a haunting melody. A short portion was featured in the fifth edition of the NPG Music Club's "NPG Ahdio Show" (previously believed to have been an excerpt from "The Rainbow Children"). This is the only example of computer drums on the album.

Prince speaks of the so-called angels as the Banished Ones, but just who are the Banished Ones? And which religion is leading him the wrong way? "The right one will guide you and the Rainbow Children will fight the everlasting fight. Those that are willing to do the work."

The Bob George voice returns again as the track fades out and speaks of the Rainbow Children knocking door to door in search of those willing to do the work, referring to Jehovah's Witnesses who attempt to spread their religion by going from door-to-door. Show of hands, how many people knew this was what Prince was referring to on "The Work – Pt. 1"?

### "The Work – Pt.1"

The lyrics to this James Brown-derived funk workout now show the true meaning of "the work." This is the only track with Kirk Johnson on drums. John Blackwell is the drummer on the other tracks featuring live drumming.

### "Everywhere"

This track lasts about three minutes, featuring uptempo jazz-flavoured music. It begins with the slowed-down voice yet again, speaking about the woman he thinks is the Muse. This is pure open religion, in the way of *Lovesexy* in that everyone can relate to his or her spiritual convictions, just as long as you loved God, your God. Prince says, "Now I know what is in my heart, now I am

ready to start." Strangely enough, track 6 flows right into track 7, which is a seven-second instrumental segue.

### "Mellow"

This five-minute track has a laidback jazzy feel that recalls "Willing And Able" on *Diamonds And Pearls*. It also mentions of Macy Gray and Common in the lyrics, it is straight romance with a hint of sex along the way.

### "The Sensual Everafter"

This is another instrumental piece with light, jazzy guitar and keyboards. It lasts less than 3 minutes.

### "1 + 1 + 1 = 3"

Yes, this song is about a threesome, but the people involved are God, the man, and the woman. Again, the woman must obey the man, "This is how it's gonna be, you wanna be with me. Ain't no room for disagree,  $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ ." Prince at least allows the woman time to think it through and consider if this is how she wants to be. In order to be with him, you must obey God and him. The music is funky, with an electronic beat and synth horns that fills. Some have likened the track to "Erotic City," while others have mentioned *Come* as a reference point.

The track continues with a passage of the Bob George voice speaking about the Banished Ones, how the Rainbow Children should join and dance around them, not they will kick you in your pants. The voice then continues on this track, talking about the digital garden and its destruction. It discusses laying treasures and how no one will ever touch them again.

Then another song (same track), 30 seconds in length, stating "a feast, a feast, a smorgasbord at least a brunch, a munch of cake, if just a piece." It says that we must eat a leaf since we are what we eat. The music is intended as a joke, sounding like an old choir. The song is clearly meant to be very lighthearted because one can hear Prince laugh at the end.

### "She Loves Me 4 Me"

This three-minute ballad is sung in a stunning vocal

# An in-depth Look at the Lyrics of *The Rainbow Children*

*THE RAINBOW CHILDREN* IS CLEARLY PRINCE'S MOST RELIGIOUS ALBUM to date. While in the past, Prince's religiosity was expressed in his unique blend of the sexual and the divine, with *The Rainbow Children* Prince makes his clearest statement of his apparent adoption of the principals and faith of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

### Adam and Eve

The title track states that the "Rainbow Children" are "flying on the wings of the New Translation," which is clearly a reference to the *New World Translation*, which is the name of the Bible used by the Jehovah's Witnesses. The image of the "Rainbow Children" implies that they are those who have obtained spiritual enlightenment. Prince talks of the "Wise One and his woman," which is quite certainly Adam and Eve.

Prince says the Wise One and his woman were "tempted by the 'Resistor'." That phrase has been used

by various Jehovah's Witnesses websites to refer to the Devil, such as at [www.nazarene-friends.org](http://www.nazarene-friends.org) where it states that "Satan = Resistor or Opposer..." The official Jehovah's Witness website uses a similar phrase when they state that "Satan means an enemy or an opposer" ([www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org)), while another site mentions how "...even Jehovah's Angel, while acting in a righteous way, has been called a resistor" ([www.e-cephr.com](http://www.e-cephr.com)). That same web site goes on to explain that there is a difference to being "a resistor in error, or even [a resistor] against immoral conduct, than being a purposeful resistor against the Almighty and His righteousness."

The song goes on to say how the Resistor tempted the woman as the Resistor was aware of the Wise One's love of God, that "she and five others were banished from the rainbow forever," but that "the covenant will be kept this time." However, while the story Prince is telling clearly resembles that of Adam and Eve, there are

differences. In both stories the woman is tempted by Satan, but in the Bible story both Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, while in Prince's lyrics the woman "and five others were banished from the rainbow forever," although the Wise One was not expelled. Except for generic references to the Banished Ones, the "five others" are not directly mentioned at any time in the lyrics, nor is there anything in the lyrics that seems to offer a clue as to what Prince is referring. And while any attempt to attach a specific meaning to the "five others" would be pure speculation, it should at least be noted that if you add the "Wise One and his woman" to that number, the total is seven, a number with much symbolic value and a favourite of Prince.

### Giving birth

The lyrics go on to play off images of the Hebrew Father and of women obeying God and giving birth.

by Prince. The lyrics are not overly religious and sing praise to the woman who loves him just the way he is. He doesn't have to comb his hair, he can wear what he wants, she doesn't care. It ends with a guitar solo.

### "Mirror Mirror"

This is an eight-minute mid-tempo funk number. It opens with a woman in a voice that kind of mocks the robotic computer voice of *The Gold Experience*. She says, "You have accessed the Akashic Records Genetic Information Division." It walks the listener through the term black, which can be construed as right, and white, which can be construed as wrong.

It then switches to London 1600 as we are supposedly attending the first lynch, a horrible mental picture. Prince must have felt it relevant to take the listener to this horrific place, and has not pulled any punches to this point in the album. Prince talks about what separates people from their last names. He also attacks today's preachers who drive around in a Lexus doing nothing to help others. Prince's message is unclear in the name game and the "this or that" issue, but more than clear on the Reverend who is afoul.

### "The Everlasting Now"

This eight-minute track of cool funk finds the Prince of now belittling the Prince of then who had a diverse following and yearned for it ever since high school. How dare he make integrated people sing that they are all stars because, in the end, they still saw him as a "spade"? It seems that Prince is reflecting on how he has accepted he is a black man. It is quite obvious that Prince feels shame on how he once would denounce his "blackness" and simply say that he was brought up in a "black and white world" and would avoid the race issue as much as possible.

Prince intimates that when black people make it, they are frowned upon by the black community. Instead of asking why, he agrees that he went down a road he shouldn't have. By believing in God, it will bring peace to him and others in the everlasting now. Prince is basically

stating that we should forget about that foolish person he was in the past and let him guide us to the future.

### "Come 2gether As 1"

The title of this track is uncertain. It could also be called "In The Name Of The Father." Musically, it's an Arabic-tinged funky ballad, lasting around eight minutes. Prince sings in a deeper voice, asking us what we would do if our last December came. Instead of partying, Prince wants us to find the reason why we live before we die, wanting everyone to come together as one.

Throughout the CD, the listener is being told that if he/she does not follow the right path, he/she will be one of the banished ones. But yet, Prince is asking us to come together as one? No, only the ones that do the work, that follow the right plan, will come together as one. The Prince of *Lovesexy* and *Graffiti Bridge* thought anyone could make it into the new world; the new Prince makes a distinction: only those who know "the truth" shall be let inside the gates.

### Impressions

*The Rainbow Children* shows Prince in a new spiritual light. This is definitely an album that will have the listeners thinking about the lyrics. With Prince's newfound inspiration from the Jehovah's Witness scriptures, some of the lyrics will not be sitting well with many fans.

Back in 1990, Prince was upset about reading reviews that overlooked his lyrics, wishing that he included a lyric book with *Graffiti Bridge*. Now Prince is challenging his listeners to delve into his lyrics. There is no way to confuse his religious message, but if it is to be a concept album, why the inclusion of "Mellow" and "She Loves Me 4 Me" tracks, which have nothing to do with the storyline?

From a musical standpoint, *The Rainbow Children* is considerably less direct and "commercial" than Prince's recent albums. Clearly, Prince has attempted to create something new and musically daring instead of compromising or recycling his music of the past. The album is much stronger than *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic*, but, as Prince

intended, it will be a release with little or no commercial success if it were released outside the NPG Music

One of the problems with the album is the voice narrates throughout. Why was the slowed-down sounding Bob George voice chosen as the narrator? Is something so spiritual? After all, this is the voice that presented as belonging to his second personality, Electric, the evil side of him, the person inside him that made him create the evil *Black Album*. Camille was he remember? So in the Prince sense, Bob George is Electric full of tricks, right? So, why did Spooky Electric become the narrator of *The Rainbow Children*? If someone is telling you what to believe, why should we listen to his voice? During the week of the listening parties at the celebration, Prince held many discussions with fans, but the question was never asked.

The listening party "coordinator" claimed that Prince has said of *The Rainbow Children*, "I held back *Lovesexy*. Here I've let it all out." Then again, she claimed that she got "chills" listening to the album and that it was on par with *Sign O' The Times* and *Lovesexy*, which most fans found to be an exaggeration and probably not an entirely honest statement. Besides, it is annoying that Prince's people refer to every upcoming album as a return to *Sign O' The Times* or *Lovesexy* because it either takes away from those albums or it looks like he has not made a decent album since. Did they forget about *The Gold Experience*? Just anyone listen to *The Rainbow Children* with an open mind and decide for themselves.

*The Rainbow Children* is Prince's personal statement, his life, and this is where he is at right now. Some will dig the music and lyrics, others will not. But in the end, Prince won. He created the album that he wanted to make. And he got the attention back on him, which are still being widely discussed. We might have paid even more attention if it were not for the cover art.

Thanks to Frederic Heller and Christian for additional information.

Prince says that "and every time that she obeys she gives birth to the Son of Man." This can be understood in terms of the importance to a religion of people having children and raising them in the same faith. The song ends with a quote from the 1981 song "Sexuality," where Prince sings, "Reproduction of the new breed leader stand up organize."

The theme of giving birth continues, with the lyrics stating that with every birth the Agreement (apparently "the covenant [that] will be kept this time") is in fact kept, and that to change any part of it would start a fall from grace. The Wise One trusts that God would send him another woman to be his wife. The songs states that if this new woman "could be Muse to the Pharaoh, then one day she might be Queen." Because of the Biblical story of Moses, the Egyptian Pharaoh is usually seen as an enemy, it is surprising at first to see it suggested that the Muse to the Pharaoh could be Queen. One possible

way to understand this is to associate the word pharaoh with the word ruler, which then brings to mind the word Prince. Prince makes a reference to proverbs 31:10, which states, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies."

### Distrust of governments

The lyrics go on to bring up matters that clearly reflect a Jehovah's Witness viewpoint, such as the distrust of worldly governments and their agencies (such as NATO), the renunciation of such things as luck and superstition. Regarding NATO, Prince notes that backwards, the acronym for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is OTAN. As far as can be determined, "Otan" has no meaning that would be applicable here, and Prince may have used it simply because "Otan" has a vague similarity to "Satan." Prince also mentions how sometimes the devil is disguised as a somebody good

person who might fool the untrained mind, although not the Rainbow Children. Prince then mentions that God will strike, leaving nothing but ashes in his wake.

In what might be the first of a few unfortunate Jewish comments found in the lyrics, Prince says "Holocaust aside" (as if it is questionable whether Holocaust should be considered), "many lived and died and he asks the rhetorical question whether it is better to be dead or sold into slavery. It is ironic that he could make a statement that seems to reflect a Jewish viewpoint, and then in virtually the next sentence state that "thinkin' like the keys on Prince's piano" (black and white keys exist next to each other) "just fine."

### The Banished Ones versus the Rainbow Children

**"One of the problems with the album is the voice that narrates throughout. Why was the slowed-down, droll-sounding Bob George voice chosen as the narrator of something so spiritual?"**

are aware of the energy and love generated by the Rainbow Children, and, being negative, want to put an end to it. The Rainbow Children resist because they are on the side of God. The Banished Ones are pawns of the Resistor, with "so-called angels of light" telling them lies. The Banished Ones arrive at the palace shouting obscenities, and they try to get rid of the king of the Rainbow Children, who presumably is the Wise One. Prince allows his anti-media bias to show in the lyrics, as he states that the Banished Ones used lies spread through "whosepapers, hellavisions and scagazines" in an attempt to confuse the Rainbow Children. The Banished Ones take over the entire world, except for the palace of the Rainbow Children, surrounding that palace with a Digital Garden. As opposed to the Garden of Eden, which was paradise on earth, the name Digital Garden implies something artificial and made by mankind, and not by God.

The Banished Ones are so brazen in their demands that they even demand to be compensated "for their time spent in the palace before the exile." The matter is resolved when the Wise One, tired of their noise, "Gladly obliged [them] with an invisible deed." In light of the negative references to the media, and the conflict between the two parties in the story, the phrase "invisible deed" brings to mind a confidential out-of-court settlement (much like the one which resolved the lawsuits between Prince and *Uptown* years ago).

The Banished Ones accept the proposal and then return to the place they were born, a place known as Menda City. The name of this city is a very inventive play on words by Prince. The word "mendacity" means to be mendacious (lying, untruthful, false or untrue), and no better name could be given for the name of the people of darkness. The Banished Ones go away, and the Rainbow Children set forth on the task of deconstructing the Digital Garden.

### Media criticism

The lyrics mention how the Rainbow Children are willing to go "door to door" in their search of people willing to do the work of deconstructing the Digital Garden. It should be noted that Jehovah's Witnesses are known for going to people's doors to proselytize. This leads into the song "The Work." Prince again criticizes the media, stating how he finds the picture of himself false. He accuses the media of telling people what they want and what they should believe, and he goes on to say the same thing happened in the Garden of Eden with Eve and the serpent. The gist of this song is that one has to be willing to toil against the Devil, who is trying to keep people from living the righteous life they should be living. Further, the more the Digital Garden was taken apart, the closer the "everlasting now" (paradise) comes to being a reality.

And as the deconstruction continued, the Rainbow Children "were witnessing" the change, but with the transformation being most evident in the Muse, the second woman sent to the Wise One to be his wife. She is "quoted" as saying that she wants to go to the land of "milk and honey," and that it is only since she found God that she finds this feeling everywhere. Given how Prince seems to be going out of his way to include Jehovah's Witness terminology and viewpoints in this album, it is more than a little ironic that in his lyrics he states that previously he was lost and would "follow what everybody says," while now his beliefs are written in his heart.

### Seduction

The song "Mellow" finds the Wise One seducing his Muse since her love for God has become so strong. The lyrics state how the Wise One wants the Muse to "get lost in the mellow of my mind." The phrase suggests that their love is more than just physical, being a joining of their minds as well. The song takes a very autobiographical turn when the lyrics state that she can watch a videotape of a "mellow afterparty" at which singer Macy Gray and rapper Common were in attendance. Prince also pokes a bit of fun at his rock star image by telling

the Muse that she may as well watch the video as it does him some time to do his hair.

The song continues as one long seduction, and Prince offers to dance a "little comical minuet" and a take off his clothing if she wants him to is reminiscent of "Was Your Girlfriend," where Prince volunteers to dance let naked if that would get his woman off. He then offers to sing to his Muse while she brings herself "to joy." As this happens, her passion takes her "out of body, out of mind" into the transcendent realm of the "sensual everafter." And as she "into the hypnotic unwind," the Wise One planted a seed of knowledge in her mind that "1 + 1 + 1 is 3." The suggestion seems to be that the two of them, plus God, makes their love-making not just the two of them one in the "sensual everafter," but the two of them one with God as well. This says how there is now a "theocratic order," which adds further evidence that theirs' is a divinely inspired love.

### Destruction of the Banished Ones

The album next moves on to tell the story of the destruction of the Banished Ones. They announce their arrival, and they threaten that if they are not allowed to dance "we'll have to kick your pants." However, far from being able to take them on, the Banished Ones are not given any slack, and the Rainbow Children rally around the palace. The Banished Ones run as they watch the destruction of their Digital Garden. And they note that artificial garden of evil unable to bear any more fruit, its poisonous trees. "The haze was finally broken," and with the purifying rain the people understood that nobody else will ever be able to "lay claim to the treasures of the Rainbow Children." At this point, the Muse, as if waking up from a dream, "Opened her eyes this time as Queen."

With the "Digital Haze" having been broken, and the Banished Ones "gone for good," the time has arrived for a reconciliation between the Wise One and his Muse/Queen. The Queen states that with his Queen he can be himself, and "have to live up to no one's fantasy." He continues to sing praises, saying how he could "write another 300 melodies for her," tell her all his secrets, and can even take her to meet his mother and not worry that she would act inappropriate. As noted above, Prince did make fun of his rock star image in "Marrow," but here he had the Wise One mention how long it takes him to comb his hair. In an interesting contrast, now he tells his Muse/Queen that with her "I don't even have to comb my hair" because she loves him for who he is.

### The Akashic Record

The album then takes an unusual turn with lyrics that explore issues of slavery and race. This is done by requesting people who wish a marriage license to access the "Akashic Records Genetic Information Division." The "Akashic Record" is a supposed spiritual place that is said to hold a complete record of everything that has ever occurred or that will occur in the future, whether it be action, thought or even feeling. It is unusual that Prince would make reference to such a metaphysical notion as the Akashic Record since Jehovah's Witnesses generally are opposed to spiritualism as being a tool of the Devil. However, since the Akashic Record is supposed to contain a complete record of everything that has happened, it allows Prince to show his version of events that happened in the past. Still, it has little to do with the main story of the album.

Having accessed the race history for African-Americans via the Akashic Record, the first thing Prince mentions is a somewhat rambling commentary on the meaning of the phrase "black and white." For Prince, "black and white" is just another way of saying "this or that." Prince states that, ultimately, "black" means the truth, while "white" is "that which is resistant to truth." According to the lyrics, when a minority people can go beyond their simple understanding of their similarities on the basis of "black and white," they can increase their understanding of the world.

the knowledge that they are "Rainbow Children," they are no longer the minority. This will cause a "reactor resistance" in those who do not have this understanding. Those who resist "must be banished as it is direct conflict with the initial action." And since the reaction is against those who are aware that they are one as Rainbow Children, those who resist are obviously resisting against God. Being by nature mortal, they cannot be "assimilated," and that would set the record up as competitors to God. They must be banished as "you cannot serve two masters," and that brings Prince back to the point that one has to either be "this" which is the truth, or "that" which resists the truth.

That ends part one of the Akashic Record selection, and now we move on to the history of the British government in the early 19th century. A representative of the British says that they have the given right to run our colonies" as they wish. Prince then goes on to say how Africans taken as slaves were forced to take Anglo-Saxon names, with a man named "Abu Cah" being renamed "John Lynch." The choice of his new name is obviously meant as a play on words, with the slave ending up being "lynched" by the slave owners who become his master.

## year 1914

The Akashic Record then jumps to the year 1914. The quote of that year by Prince is important, since *The Watchtower*, the official publication of the Jehovah's Witnesses, published a series of predictions regarding the year 1914. Those predictions began in the late 19th century until the early 20th century. An example of those predictions included, from October 1892 (page 1243), "The Millennium of peace and blessing would be introduced by 40 years of trouble, beginning slightly in 1874 and increasing until social chaos should prevail in 1914..." In another quote regarding the battle of Armageddon, from 15 November 1892 (page 1355), it was written in *The Watchtower* that "the date of the close of that 'battle' is definitely marked in the calendar as October 1914. It is already in progress, its beginning having dated from October 1874" (both quotes taken from [www.jehovahswitnesses.com](http://www.jehovahswitnesses.com)).

An example of a current quote regarding 1914, and one that is consistent with Prince's lyrics that the devil has been "out behind corporate eyes" since that time can be found on the official Jehovah's Witness web site, where it states regarding Jesus establishing His kingdom on earth, "Even when He ascended into the heavens, he still had to wait for Jehovah's appointed time (Psalm 110:1, 2; Hebrews 1:3). Bible prophecy shows that appointed time came in 1914 C.E. However, someone will ask, 'Rather than perfect government, did not 1914 mark the start of increased world woes?' That is exactly the case! There is a close connection between the coming of Christ's Kingdom and the catastrophic events of recent years, as you shall now see" ([www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org)).

## names

As the song continues, Prince engages in his second use of names that could be interpreted as an anti-Jewish sentiment in the album. Three times he has a person ask an African-American "What you mad about?" In response, the lyrics note that the person asking the question still has his family name, unlike the African slaves forcibly renamed. The family names of each of the people in question are "Rosenbloom," "Pearlman" and "Goldstruck." The first two are common Jewish names. The last is essentially a corruption of such Jewish names as "Stein" or "Goldberg," but all the more regrettably, the name he uses plays off the repugnant stereotype of the wealthy, vicious Jew. Of course, this is not to say that Prince's beliefs are anti-Jewish. However, the decisions on what names he used in the song were conscious ones on his part, and as such he is responsible for how those decisions can be perceived.

In contrast, the African-American names used in this section of the song are intended to be noble and affirming of the person's self-worth. The African American talking to Mr.

Rosenbloom decided that he will be called "John Blackwell," with the play on the words "black" and "well" being very obvious. The African-American speaking with Mr. Pearlman calls himself "Clay," which seems to be a reference to the boxer Cassius Clay, who later changed his name to Mohammed Ali. During the period of Prince's name change to the symbol, Prince was fond of referring to the ridicule Ali endured when he first changed his name. For the third self-given African-American name, the lyrics state that perhaps everyone should "start all over" and name themselves. Prince creates a defiant and proud figure when he says "put up a one-gloved fist, make a sound, Violet Brown." There does not seem to be a historical or literary figure of that name that Prince is referring to. The name seems to be Prince's way of combining his signature color of purple with his views on racial pride. The most obvious parallel would be "Violet The Organ Grinder."

In this same portion of the song Prince also brings up other issues, namely the notion that the Europeans were not the first to reach the shores of the New World, and that television preachers can be greedy charlatans. Prince then provides another view from the Akashic Record in which Thomas Jefferson, who was in fact a slave owner, supposedly states, "My fellow Americans, if there is a just God, we're gonna pay for this." In contrast to Jefferson's purported statement of guilt, Prince next quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech in which he states his vision of a time when "black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will be able to join hands..." Given the seemingly negative use of Jewish surnames just a short time before, as well as the dismissive reference to the Holocaust, the inclusion of the most famous portion of the "I have a dream" speech is quite notable.

## The everlasting now

The lyrics continue, but now on the theme common in Jehovah's Witness literature and beliefs, which is the distrust of governments. As an example of this, it is stated on the official Jehovah's Witness web site (at the same URL as cited above) that "because our first parents rejected God's law, human government came under the control of Satan." Prince tells of how he used to know a person who was a ruler, but who gave up his "pearly crown" when he became educated to the fact that "men aren't fit to rule." That ruler, quite possibly a "Prince," used to be "lead by the ways of man," but now he seeks the kingdom of God from within his own heart and mind. And it is this "accurate knowledge of Christ and the Father" that is essential for the coming of the "Everlasting Now."

A clue that the ruler who gave up his crown is a metaphor for Prince is found in the next few verses from the song. He talks of the "brutha" who has been on stage since he was young, a very popular performer who sang to an integrated audience that one's colour was not important and that "everybody's a star." But then the lyrics mention false fans who turn against the performer when he "changed the funk." But Prince refuses to allow the false fans to get him down, as he knows he is on the right course.

In contrast to the course he is on, Prince describes a shallow woman in a "make-believe world," with "plastic boobs and clip on curls." She might dance on a pole, go to tanning parlors to bake her skin, and might even end up getting married to someone, but in the end she has nothing for the afterlife. The song gets very preachy and unmistakably Christian in its references to how "those who love Christ are the ones who benefit." The final evidence that Prince is referring to himself in this portion of the song is that he has a false fan say that even though the current music is funky, he wished that "he'd play like he used to." The song ends with Prince invoking the name of God the Father and God the Son and stating, "We need to come together, come together as one."

**"The title track states that the 'Rainbow Children' are 'flying on the wings of the New Translation,' which is clearly a reference to the NEW WORLD TRANSLATION, which is the name of the Bible used by the Jehovah's Witnesses."**

# PRINCE GONE

**Shortly after the  
release of *Rave Unz*  
*The Joy Fantastic***

**Prince embarked on a  
new album project.**

**Entitled *High*, the  
album was  
completed in the  
summer of 2000, but  
it was never released.**

**However, all the  
tracks have been  
made available in one  
form or another,  
most of them via  
Prince's Internet club,  
the NPG Music Club.**

**This article by Per  
Nilsen examines the  
contents of the  
cancelled *High* album.**

PRINCE BEGAN RECORDING SONGS FOR *High* IN EARLY 2000 after nearly two months of promotional work in support of 1999's *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic*. Recording engineer Femi Jiya, who had been employed at Paisley Park in 1988-89, returned to work on the sessions. Prince had most of the new album in the can by the time one of the songs, "Golden Parachute," was previewed at a Paisley Park concert, on July 8th (am) 2000. Angie Stone added her vocal to "U Make My Sun Shine" in late July and it was announced on NPG Online LTD on August 8th that Jiya had delivered "a rough copy of another new album at the gate of Prince's estate." It was not until much later that it became known that the title of the new album was *High*.

## Plans

After the bitter disappointment over the outcome of the *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic* project, Prince was unsure of how to release the new album. Another major-label hook-up seemed futile so soon after *Rave*, which was released on November 9th 1999. Initially, Prince planned to release *High* independently, much like 1998's *Newpower Soul* album. He shot videos for some of the songs; the videos for "Supercute" and "The Daisy Chain" debuted at a Paisley Park party on August 26th (am) 2000. Prince had high hopes for the commercial success of "U Make My Sun Shine," electing it as the lead-off single. The song was previewed for local radio DJs at a Paisley Park meeting on September 22nd 2000. Subsequently, Donnie Simpson premiered the track on his Chicago radio show on November 2nd. The song (along with "When Will We B Paid?") was made available on December 21st as an MP3 download from NPG Online LTD.

"U Make My Sun Shine" was released to US radio on February 13th 2001. Prince had held meetings with many radio programmers on the *Hit N Run* tour in November 2000, but it had little effect on the radio stations' willingness to play Prince's latest song which received minimal airplay. He also teamed up with Wingspan Records, a small independent hip-hop label from Virginia, in an attempt to get the song across to a wider audience. The label released the song to US retail and radio on April 10th. "We're excited about the opportunity to support Prince and help get this song out," said Charles Fulp, co-founder of Wingspan. "Prince made a great song and people deserve to have the chance to enjoy it." Regardless of Wingspan's excellent track record of hits, including Chuck Smooth's 1999 hit "Who Let The Dogs Out?", Prince's song made very little impact on the charts.

By early 2001, Prince seems to have lost interest in releasing *High* as a traditional album to a mainstream audience, instead opting to make the tracks available to his loyal fanbase. Plans for the NPG Music Club were already well advanced and the new website would be an ideal outlet for the songs. Besides, Prince was already planning a new album, *The Rainbow Children*, so the idea of releasing *High* fell by the wayside.

All the 10 *High* tracks were released in the first half of 2001. "When Eye Lay My Hands On U" was released by the NPG Music Club in February 2001 and "High," "My Medallion," "Golden Parachute," were featured in the "NPG Ahdio" show the same month. The video of "The Daisy Chain" was released by the NPG Music Club in March and "Supercute" followed in June. Thus, "Gamillah" and "Underneath The Cream" are the only *High* tracks not to have been released by NPG Online LTD or NPG Music Club.

Prince also found other ways to release some of the *High* songs to his hardcore audience. Four of the tracks were put on CD singles and sold on the 2001 edition of the *Hit N Run* tour: "Supercute"/"Underneath The Cream" and "The Daisy Chain"/"Gamillah" (a single of "Peace"/"2045 Radical Man" was also sold on the tour). Pressed in limited runs, the CD singles instantly became collectors' items. Meanwhile, "Underneath The Cream" was included as a bonus track on the independent release *The Remix Experience*, a "maxi-single" CD-R exclusively sold at DJ Brother Jules' DJ's Music Emporium store in Minneapolis.

## Themes

Ten tracks were slated for *High*. As of late 2000, the se-

quence of songs was as follows (there may have been other configurations): "Supercute"; "Underneath The Cream"; "Golden Parachute"; "When Will We B Paid?"; "The Daisy Chain"; "Gamillah"; "High"; "My Medallion"; "U Make My Sun Shine"; "When Eye Lay My Hands On U." The album is essentially a solo performance by Prince although there are a few guests, including Najee on "Golden Parachute," Angie Stone and Millennia on "U Make My Sun Shine," and rapper DVS on "The Daisy Chain."

There is no thematic consistency to the album. Most of the lyrics cover familiar Prince territory, with topics ranging from the positive effects of his music ("High"), the music industry ("Golden Parachute"), desire ("Supercute"), lovemaking and sexual fantasy ("When Eye Lay My Hands On U" and "Underneath The Cream"), and more mature romance ("U Make My Sun Shine"). "My Medallion" follows in the narrative tradition of songs like "Little Red Corvette," "Darling Nikki," "Raspberry Beret," and "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" with a story that chronicles an encounter with a girl. The content of "The Daisy Chain" is more oblique and the lyric can be interpreted in different ways; one reading is that it is about the temptations of the music industry while another is that the song is a statement on morality and monogamy. Meanwhile, "Gamillah" is an instrumental.

While not a Prince original, "When Will We B Paid?" differs radically from the rest of the album, being an angry protest against the treatment of Afro-American people in the US. Prince has previously released some songs that have touched on racial issues, such as "Race" on *Come* and "We March" on *The Gold Experience*, but they have usually been more indirect and "philosophical" in nature than "When Will We B Paid?" Some of his most politically charged songs of the past have been given to other artists. Songs like "Uncle Sam" (Tevin Campbell's *I'm Ready*, 1993), "Super Hero" (Earth, Wind & Fire's *Millennium*, 1993), and "You Will Be Moved" (Mavis Staples' *The Voice*, 1993) painted a bleak picture of America as an unequal society offering limited opportunities for the poor and Afro-Americans, preaching love as the answer to the hardships.

"When Will We B Paid?" shows a great degree of seriousness and stands in sharp contrast to the fairly lightweight material of most of *High*. Prince undoubtedly has a socially conscious "protest" album in him, but he seems wary of releasing more than the odd track that deals with racial issues or life's harsh realities, instead preferring to focus on more superficial themes about partying, desire, and the pleasures of the flesh. He has also become increasingly interested in focusing on the solutions, God's love and our love for one another, than dealing in his work with the "negativity" of the problems. "You can talk about symptoms all day long, but I like to talk about solutions," he told *Yahoo! Internet Life* earlier this year.

## Music

Musically, *High* continues in the vein of the preceding albums, *Emancipation*, *Newpower Soul* and *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic*, containing mostly polished and accessible "radio-friendly" songs geared for pop/R&B mainstream acceptance. There is not much experimentation and few songs venture into uncharted musical territory for Prince. Much like *Rave*, *High* also suffers from the inclusion of a few too many slow, languid numbers. "Gamillah," "Underneath The Cream," "U Make My Sun Shine," and "Golden Parachute" are all restrained and lacking in energy.

Interestingly, many of the tracks released via the NPG Music Club, for example "Silicon," "Y Should Eye Do That When Eye Can Do This?", "Sadomasochistic Groove," and "Hypno Paradise," have far more edge and urgency, making much of *High* seem watered-down and tame by comparison. Clearly, Prince favours his more comfortable and easily accessible material when he assembles albums tailored for a wider audience. More than likely, the *Newpower Soul* reject "Sadomasochistic Groove" was deemed too challenging for that album, while "Y Should Eye Do That When Eye Can Do This?" was probably left off *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic* on similar grounds. This emphasis on more undemand-

# GET U HIGH

ing and "consumer-friendly" material is unfortunate, resulting in a feel of compromise rather than attack or passion. Prince's most inspired and outstanding material has an intensity and emotional commitment that is simply lacking from much of *High*.

While not a masterpiece, *High* isn't entirely devoid of sparkling material, however. "When Eye Lay My Hands On U" and "Supercute" are two obvious examples, both featuring strong melodies and striking arrangements. The quirky, clipped funk of "My Medallion" is another highspot. Somewhat less outstanding, the title track is an attempt at a catchy, poppy effort but it fails to convince because of an insubstantial melody and chorus. Despite some interesting production touches, "The Daisy Chain" is essentially a generic Prince funk number. "U Make My Sun Shine" is in many ways an impressive soul ballad, but it lacks the memorability to match Prince's top-rate material in this (or any other) "genre." The song is certainly not the obvious candidate for a lead-off single and Prince's decision to launch the project with this track is inexplicable, not least considering the weak impact of the slow songs released as the first singles from *Emancipation* ("Betcha By Golly Wow!"), *Newpower Soul* ("The One"), and *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic* ("The Greatest Romance Ever Sold"). It is possible that Prince was hoping for Angie Stone's presence to boost radio interest but the strategy didn't work out.

The arrangements on *High* are very sparse and the sound is clean and uncluttered. Computer drums are employed throughout. Although Prince has updated the drum sound somewhat from *Emancipation*, *Newpower Soul*, and *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic*, the snare drum is still rather soft and "thin," while the bass drum has a plastic, rubbery-sounding quality. Synths dominate the arrangements, providing textures and basslines, some of which are very low, almost being more felt than heard. The guitar is used very sparingly on most tracks. Interestingly, the minimalist synth-based production recalls Prince's earlier "Minneapolis sound," although one marked difference is the beats, which completely lack the ferocious snare accent and overall rhythmic attack of Prince's earlier drum machine work.

Pleasingly, the album demonstrates that Prince has lost none of his skills as a producer and arranger. Many of the arrangements are highly imaginative, sporting many unexpected touches, intricate details, and unfamiliar sounds. Unfortunately, the same originality has not been applied to the songs themselves, their melodies, rhythms, and lyrics; the inconsistent songwriting is the primary weakness of the album. Most tracks feature fairly unremarkable rhythmic ingredients and melodies. Had the album been released to a mass audience, it would not have been considered one of Prince's most important artistic statements; it seems likely that the reviews would have been fairly negative, perhaps comparable to those of 1998's *Newpower Soul*. To some degree, the *High* material seems aimless, with several tracks sounding like quick toss-offs, empty of conviction both musically and lyrically. Perhaps Prince realized that the overall quality of the songs wasn't high enough – despite the proposed album title – and that this was one reason why he elected not to release the album to a wider audience. By releasing the songs individually, they were not as heavily scrutinized as they would be as a whole.

## Tracks

Opening with the sound of an airplane landing, "Supercute" is something of a pop masterpiece, boasting a haunting, vaguely wistful melody and a contagious chorus. It also has a striking rhythmic groove created by interplay between a reggae-flavoured bassline and a marimba-style keyboard motif. The lyric is far less exciting, however, concerning Prince's fascination with a woman from East LA, who is flying out for a rendezvous. His interest seems primarily physical, as he gets excited about seeing her "body on display." He also pays her a visit, watching her at play with her sexual toys, including a vibrator.

"Underneath The Cream" is a relaxed, swooning song that recalls some of Prince's most smooth and "silky" remixes, featur-

ing the fluid high-pitched synth decorations that Prince is fond of incorporating into these types of songs. The drumbeat, meanwhile, bears similarities to "Pink Cashmere" from *The Hits/The B-Sides*. The arrangement is synth-based, with occasional flickers of electric piano providing some spice.

The phrase "underneath the cream" was first mentioned in "Hot Wit U" on *Rave Unz The Joy Fantastic*. The lyric finds Prince fantasizing about his woman, "Thinking about [her] thighs," wishing he was "deep inside [her] ocean." Recalling some of the early declarations of desire and lust found on *For You and Prince*, the lyric could be from almost any of Prince's previous albums.

Continuing in the laidback musical manner of "Underneath The Cream," "Golden Parachute" is a calm, lazy jazz-tinged number with a funky feel. The song essentially functions as a foundation for various melodic "excursions," not unlike many Madhouse tracks, and instrumental embellishments, including flute improvisations, muted trumpet fills, harp flourishes, wah-wah guitar licks, and jazzy guitar runs. Quite likely, the title was inspired by Clive Davis' firing from Arista Records in May 2000. The expression "golden parachute" refers to top-level executives receiving monetary compensation and bonuses when they leave or are fired from a position. Prince criticises the music industry's ownership of intellectual property.

"When Will We B Paid?" (originally titled "When Will We Be Paid?") was written by Randall Stewart and performed by The Staple Singers on their 1970 album *We'll Get Over*. Prince has performed it live a few times, beginning in late 1999. Asking, "When will we be paid for the work we've done," the lyric lists some of the hardships that Afro-Americans have endured in US history, "Our women cooked all your food and washed your clothes, we picked cotton and laid the railroad steel, worked our hands down to the bone at your lumber mill." Musically, Prince's rendition is a slow, downbeat rock number with an anthemic singalong chorus. His vocal is passionate and he expresses a barely controlled anger and frustration. Some fiery guitar interjections give the song more urgency than most other *High* tracks.

"The Daisy Chain" is a rousing, rough-edged funk offering with a percussive beat and a chattering rhythm guitar to the fore. The track is essentially a one-chord vamp, interrupted only by a brief chorus. Prince's voice is treated at times, making it sound as if he were singing through a megaphone. The musical elements don't vary much, however, and the track soon outstays its welcome.

The lyric of "The Daisy Chain" is rather vague. One reading is that Prince is condemning loose sexual behaviour, an interpretation supported by lines like "a mouse to the trap, the cheese is up, a little bit of pleasure for the guilty pain, think about it sister, now you're livin' in shame." Along the same lines, the rap at the end delivered by DVS describes a dancer named Kelly, who was "steppin' out a gown" as he was delivering a pizza to her house. The rap attempts to point out to the girl that she will never develop relationships of commitment and respect if she is so willing to give her body up to anyone.

The meaning of the expression "daisy chain" is not made clear from the song. The phrase can have a sexual connotation: a "daisy chain" is an orgy situation where all members are linked together physically in various sexual positions, thereby creating a continuous "daisy chain" of human bodies all "serving" one another in various capacities. The chorus states, "Bless my soul, save my name, I ain't never going down to the daisy chain," followed by a repeat of "black girl givin' it up, white girl givin' it up." These lines can be seen as a way of saying that Prince will not fool around with the wrong kind of women, refraining from quick encounters with women that want to take advantage of him. However, another interpretation of the "daisy chain" expression is that it refers to the music industry, where record companies, radio stations, executives are linked together. Without some of these key links, an artist won't be able to get his songs on the radio. Prince may be saying that he is not going to be part of the "daisy chain" of the music industry and the line about black and white girls "givin' it up" could refer to all the artists

that sign their soul to the industry.

The instrumental "Gamillah" is an unhurried and serene piece with a pretty and somewhat plaintive melody that brings to mind "Father's Song." Prince plays the melody on a semi-acoustic guitar against a lush synth-based backdrop.

A buoyant, upbeat pop number, "High" is one of the most immediately accessible of the *High* tracks. It has a breezy, cheerful chorus, spiced with Prince's unmistakeable synth fills. The song is rather likeable, but the impact is reduced by a stuttering reverberating drumbeat that nearly overpowers the other instruments. Prince assures the listeners that he has "the music to get you high again" and the song concerns the uplifting power of his music. Thus, the message echoes "Purple Music," which also stated that Prince's music made him high.

"My Medallion" begins with Prince speaking the lyrics, as if he were relating a story to a friend. He tells a story about a girl, "this pretty thang," who snatches his medallion and calls him a bitch. However, he finds out where she works and confronts her, telling her, "I don't know what your name or your game is." He says that he is "in the mood to do something koo koo" to her. She gives him a kiss and runs out the back door. Apparently, he never gets his medallion back.

Musically, "My Medallion" is a slow, taut funk offering sporting a stripped-down arrangement consisting of a drum machine beat, a few bass notes, and some clipped guitar stabs. A flute provides additional flavour on the chorus. The chorus is quite contagious, consisting of the repeated phrase, "I don't know why I want that girl." While not an outstanding composition, the track is playful and original enough to make for compelling listening.

A duet with rising R&B star Angie Stone, "U Make My Sun Shine" is an old-school soul ballad. With its call-and-response backing vocals by the girl group Millenia and the stop-start structure of the music, it is one of the most overtly gospel-influenced songs Prince has ever written. Stone sings the second verse and joins Prince on the chorus. The verses are rather meandering, building slowly towards the chorus. Unfortunately, the chorus is anti-climactic and doesn't leave much of an impression.

Owing a passing nod to "The One" on *Newpower Soul*, the lyric of "U Make My Sun Shine" is a tender expression of devotion. Prince is trying to convince a woman to leave her man, offering comfort and reassuring her, "In this trusted place you can erase every tear that ever rolled down your weary face." She has been "in the dark much too long" having let "them devils define what it takes to be a woman." The lyric doesn't specify what she has been through, but it is implied that she is a hooker, as Prince says, "I could tell you what the 'I' in the pimp stands for." However, despite the obvious effort put into the music and the more mature lyrics, the song is lethargic and fails to ignite.

Intended as *High*'s closing track, "When Eye Lay My Hands On U" is a slow rock offering that radiates quality, showcasing a dramatic melody and a tense, obsessive atmosphere. It alternates between gentle verses with Prince almost whispering the words and a more forceful chorus with loud drums and an odd, echo-like disruptive guitar sound. A bridge section introduces a new melody, providing a change of pace. Prince adds a piercing guitar solo on top of the chorus the last time it appears. Not unlike "Underneath The Cream," the song concerns Prince's lust for a woman. He describes how he wants to make love to her, asking, "Are you ready for the touch that makes you go insane?" While the song is clearly addressed to the woman, the lyric also has religious undertones. God would lay his hands on his followers and the idea of "the laying on of hands" is common in evangelical Christian practices; a preacher lays his hands on infirm persons and "heals" them.

By Per Nilsen.  
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# Freaks Gonna Bob 2 This



**Prince's NPG Music Club – "The experience for those who know better" in Prince's words – has generated a great deal of excitement and discussion in fan circles. The club has achieved the goals set out upon the launch in February 2001: to deliver music directly to the fans and to give the benefits of a fan club. This article discusses the first eight months of the club, offering both praise and a number of suggestions as how the quality of the club could be improved even further. Accompanying the article is a "trackography," detailing the releases thus far.**

WHEN NPG RECORDS AND PAISLEY PARK ANNOUNCED AN online music club to distribute Prince's music, many here at UPTOWN and in the Prince-fan community had their reservations. After all, this was the organization that was unable to fulfill subscriptions to *Controversy* and *NPG* magazines and had never run a successful fan organization. With the exception of a few bumps in the road, however, Prince has finally managed to produce a club that has his fans excited once again.

### Initial problems

One of these bumps in the road occurred prior to the club's launch date. Due to open 14 February 2001, the company that was running it at the time, Tekadence Inc., was unable to foresee that their interface (which ran solely on the Apple QuickTime platform) would be unable to function when the latest Beta version of QuickTime expired on the day of NPGMC's launch. As such, the opening of the club was delayed until 18 February 2001.

This was one of a number of glitches in the system used by Tekadence. The interface for the NPGMC was slow and demanded high levels of memory from a personal computer. It was not compatible with Apple Macintosh computers and many people found problems running it with specific versions of the JAVA applet. Despite this, Paisley Park was able to deliver the promised content, with five unreleased songs, four live tracks, four video clips and two radio programs being released in the first two months alone.

Early in April, the NPGMC ended its affiliation with Tekadence and Sam Jennings, a web-programmer and designer who had developed other Prince websites, took sole responsibility of developing the new site. Rather than using a bulky outside program, he simply developed a website to house the new tracks and videos, allowing all users to access the Club.

### Excitement

Since that time, not only has the NPGMC released the promised number of tracks every month, but it has also given fans access to preferred seating at concerts and sent them the *Rave Inz The Joy Fantastic* CD at no additional cost. Many fans have commented that they would never have been able to sit so close to the stage at concerts if it had not been for the NPGMC.

With the preferred seating incentive, the NPGMC has accomplished a number of goals: it has given Prince's most ardent fans a tremendous advantage at getting tickets, it has placed his most ardent fans closest to the stage thus generating increased excitement at concerts, and it has avoided the problem of ticket-scalpers constantly getting the best seats in the house.

Of course, one cannot forget that the purpose of the NPGMC is to release Prince's latest music directly to his fans. The club has managed to mix both old and new music into each month's release, satisfying fans of Prince's many eras of music-making. It has generated excitement and discussion in fan circles on the merits of the new work, the nostalgia of old and the possibility of new albums to come. It is certain that not everyone will enjoy every song released, but the monthly release of

new music certainly gives fans something to anticipate. The club is promising the entire *The Rainbow Childe* to be available for download in October 2001.

### Technical aspects

That is not to say that the NPGMC is without its problems. A number of suggestions could be made to improve the quality of the club. Firstly, a major technical criticism is that the quality and format of the videos are not up to the standards of 2001 technology. Currently, many computer users with high-speed access are able to download MPEG format videos, which are near-perfect quality and can be burned to CD-Rs and watched on DVD players. QuickTime simply does not allow for the quality of MPEG when viewed at full-screen size.

Secondly, many complain that the "Hi-Quality" MP3 files are only 256kbps while CD-quality sound is only achieved at bit-rates of 320kbps or higher. Clearly, many with high-speed access to the Internet would prefer the songs in WAVE format (which is equivalent to perfect CD quality).

Another suggestion regarding the technical aspects of the club would be with regards to the "NPG Ahdi Show." Many NPGMC members burn each month's releases onto CD-R for personal listening enjoyment. It would be helpful if the NPGMC provided a track listing (with track times) of each show.

### Suggestions

This brings us to the suggestion that the NPGMC could produce a CD of its releases every six months which would contain perfect quality tracks. These could be offered to club members at an additional cost, and many would take the Club up on this offer. Of course, this may not be a financially feasible endeavour for Paisley Park as producing only a few hundred CDs is extremely expensive.

One final major suggestion would be one that could only be authorized by Prince himself, and we believe it would benefit both him and his fans. Why doesn't Prince release full concerts through the NPGMC (either on CD or in MP3 format)? By doing so soon after a concert is played, he will reduce the sale of illegal bootleg and give fans an incredible souvenir of the concert they just attended. Prince has alluded to this idea in the past saying that concert attendees of the *Jam Of The Year* tour may get CDs of the performance they just attended. More recently, the NPGMC stated that some song from the Montreal Jazz Festival performance would be included in the following month's releases, but Prince promptly changed his mind upon hearing the sound mix of the concert. Could any soundboard mix be worse than the bootlegged CDs that many fans listen to? We encourage Prince to explore this option both as a business and artistic venture.

### Achieving the goals

As this article was going to press, the NPGMC released their latest files, the August and September editions (only available to premium subscribers until mid-September). This release garnered a great deal of criticism from Prince fans for a number of reasons. Firstly, th

release was delayed until late August and the NPGMC claimed, "We're takin' r time 2 prepare something special." This release proved only to be four MP3 files for each month, two of which had previously been released ("Horny Pony" and "Thieves In The Temple (Remix)"). Fans were upset that one MP3 for each of these months had already been released and were already owned on CD by many followers. Seemingly to make up for this, the NPGMC added two QuickTime videos (one per month) of live performances from the recent tour.

We at UPTOWN hypothesize that the delay in the August release may have been in preparation for the online release of *The Rainbow Children*, which has now been promised for October. It is possible that Prince held the album back for post-production, leading the NPGMC to release less significant tracks. No matter the reason, the NPGMC should ensure that future releases do not include any previously officially available tracks.

In summary, we here at UPTOWN feel that Prince and the NPG Music Club are doing an outstanding job of achieving the goals set out upon the launch of the club: to deliver new and/or unreleased music directly to the fans (with no middle-man) and to give the benefits of a fan club. As Sam Jennings and the rest of the organization become acquainted with the technology, we can expect online chats, exclusive merchandising, and software in the future. UPTOWN looks forward to reporting on NPG Music Club releases and changes in the months and years to come.

## A "Trackography" of the NPG Music Club

This is a "trackography" of the NPG Music Club releases thus far, listing both individual tracks (audio and video) and the contents of the so-called NPG Ahdio Shows. The release date of each edition is given in brackets.

The dates for live recordings, including TV performances, are the recording dates (as opposed to broadcast dates).

The complete track listings are given, including the bonus tracks released only to premium members. The Ahdio Shows contain Prince material, both released and previously unreleased songs, as well as music by other artists, including many Prince associates such as Rosie Gaines, The Time, Rhonda Smith, The Fonky Baldheads, Millennia, and Larry Graham. The comments on the shows are restricted to the previously unavailable Prince material. The duration is given in parenthesis.

Prince has occasionally added some instrumentation or production touches to some of the previously released material in the Ahdio Shows. He has also recorded incidental music and short untitled pieces that are incorporated into the shows.

### **Edition #1 (18 February 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "The Funky Design"
  - ✓ "Mad"
  - ✓ "NPGMC Commercial" [commercial]
  - ✓ "Peace"
  - ✓ "Splash"
  - ✓ "When Eye Lay My Hands On U"
- Video:
- ✓ "NPGMC Intro" [commercial]
  - ✓ "U Make My Sun Shine"
  - ✓ "When Eye Lay My Hands On U"
- "NPG Ahdio Show #1":

This "radio show" on "77.7 WNPG" features Prince as a DJ (he employs his Tora Tora voice). The show contains several unreleased songs by Prince, including four

tracks originally slated for *High*: "My Medallion," "When Eye Lay My Hands On U," "High," and "Golden Parachute." Other Prince-related tracks include an excerpt of the Carmen Electra track "The Juice," a "Love Sign" remix, a guitar-heavy live take on "Days Of Wild" from 2000, and a Madhouse version of "Kamasutra/Overture #8" from 1995. (56 mins)

Comments: It should be noted that "NPGMC Commercial" MP3, "When Eye Lay My Hands On U" MP3, and "NPGMC Intro" video were (and still are) free tracks. They are listed on the NPG Music Club website in their own "Free Files" section, separate from the other February tracks. Also noteworthy is an interactive version of the "When Eye Lay My Hands On U" video that could be remixed by using the NPG Player that customers originally had to download to play the videos and ahdio shows.

### **Edition #2 (22 March 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Letitgo" (live Paisley Park, 22 October (am) 1995)
  - ✓ "The Return Of The Bump Squad" (live Paisley Park, 22 October (am) 1995)
  - ✓ "Vicki Waiting" (live Paisley Park, 22 October (am) 1995)
  - ✓ "We March" (live Paisley Park, 22 October (am) 1995)
- Video:

- ✓ "Controversy"/"Mutiny" (live State University Event Center Arena, San José, 8 December 2000)
  - ✓ "The Daisy Chain"
- "NPG Ahdio Show #2":

The second NPG Music Club "Ahgio Show" includes one previously unavailable studio recording by Prince, "Silicon," and three tracks from a 1995 Paisley Park show (22 October (am) 1995). (51 mins)

### **Edition #3 (22 April 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "The Work – Part 1"
  - ✓ "Northside"
  - ✓ "The Daisy Chain"
  - ✓ "Habibi"
- "NPG Ahgio Show #3":

The third instalment in the NPG Music Club's "Ahgio Show" series showcases two previously unavailable tracks, "Sex Me, Sex Me Not" and "Northside." Other notable Prince tracks include an instrumental version of "Superfunkycalfragisexy" and a *Parade* tour live take of "America" (Hamburg, 31 August 1986). Also included is The Time outtake "Murph Drag." (46 mins)

### **Edition #4 (15 May 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Hit U In The Socket" [Rosie Gaines]
  - ✓ "Props N' Pounds"
  - ✓ "Sex In My Bones" [The Fonky Baldheads]
- Video:
- ✓ "The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker" (live *The Tonight Show*, 4 May 2001)
  - ✓ "Get Wild" (live *The White Room*, 5 April 1995)
  - ✓ "I Could Never Take The Place Of Your Man" (live *Hit N Run* tour, 2000/2001)
  - ✓ "The Work – Part 1" (live *The Tonight Show*, 3 May 2001)
- "NPG Ahgio Show #4":

The May edition features primarily live performances, including 24 minutes from a 1986 *Parade* tour show (Hamburg, 31 August), "Strange Relationship" from First Avenue, Minneapolis, 21 March 1987, and three songs from a 2002 *Act I* show (New York, 26 March) (60 mins).

### **Edition #5 (11 June 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Sex Me Sex Me Not"
  - ✓ "Supercute"
  - ✓ "Y Should Eye Do That When Eye Can Do Th
- Video:
- ✓ "Baby Knows" (live *Harald Schmidt Show*, 25 November 1995)
  - ✓ "Prettyman" (live *TFI Friday*, 19 November 1999)
  - ✓ "The Ride" (live Bagley's Warehouse, London, 8 September (am) 1993, *The Sacrifice Of Victor* home video)
- "NPG Ahgio Show #5":

All the tracks featured in the June edition are obviously available with the exception of (a portion of) *The Rainbow Children* track. Slightly different versions of "Race" and "Violet The Organ Grinder" are also included. (60 mins)

### **Edition #6 (7 July 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Hypno Paradise"
  - ✓ "Sadomasochistic Groove"
  - ✓ Untitled instrumental
  - ✓ "Van Gogh"
- Video:

- ✓ "One Song"
  - ✓ "Endorphinmachine" (live *Nulle Part Ailleurs*, 5 May 1994)
- "NPG Ahgio Show #6":

The only previously unavailable track in this show is Madhouse's "Asswoop" (also known as "Asswhuppin' In A Trunk"). Prince also sings a country song that may be called "All My Old Friends" which was obviously considered a joke. The "Remix" of "My Name Is Prince" features some minor differences from the previously released version (51 mins).

Comments: The NPGMC has listed "Sadomasochistic Groove" as "S&M Groove" on its file page. However, the title was "Sadomasochistic Groove" when a portion of the track was posted on Love 4 One Another in 1994, which is why we have used the title "Sadomasochistic Groove." "Van Gogh" is wrongly spelled "Van C" on the NPGMC file page, but the proper title should be "Van Gogh."

### **Edition #7 (28 August 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Get Wild (Miami Mix)" [The NPG]
  - ✓ "Horny Pony"
  - ✓ "Judas Kiss"
- Video:

- ✓ "Bambi" (live *A Celebration* tour, 2001)
- "NPG Ahgio Show #7":

Contains a longer version of "High" and three tracks from the *Parade* tour (from the US "Hit & Run" leg): "Automatic," "D.M.S.R.," and "The Dance" (51mins)

### **Edition #8 (28 August 2001)**

Audio:

- ✓ "Contest Song"
  - ✓ "My Medallion"
  - ✓ "Rebirth Of The Flesh" (live rehearsal 1988)
  - ✓ "Thieves In The Temple (Remix)"
- Video:
- ✓ "If I Was Your Girlfriend"

*all issues so far...*

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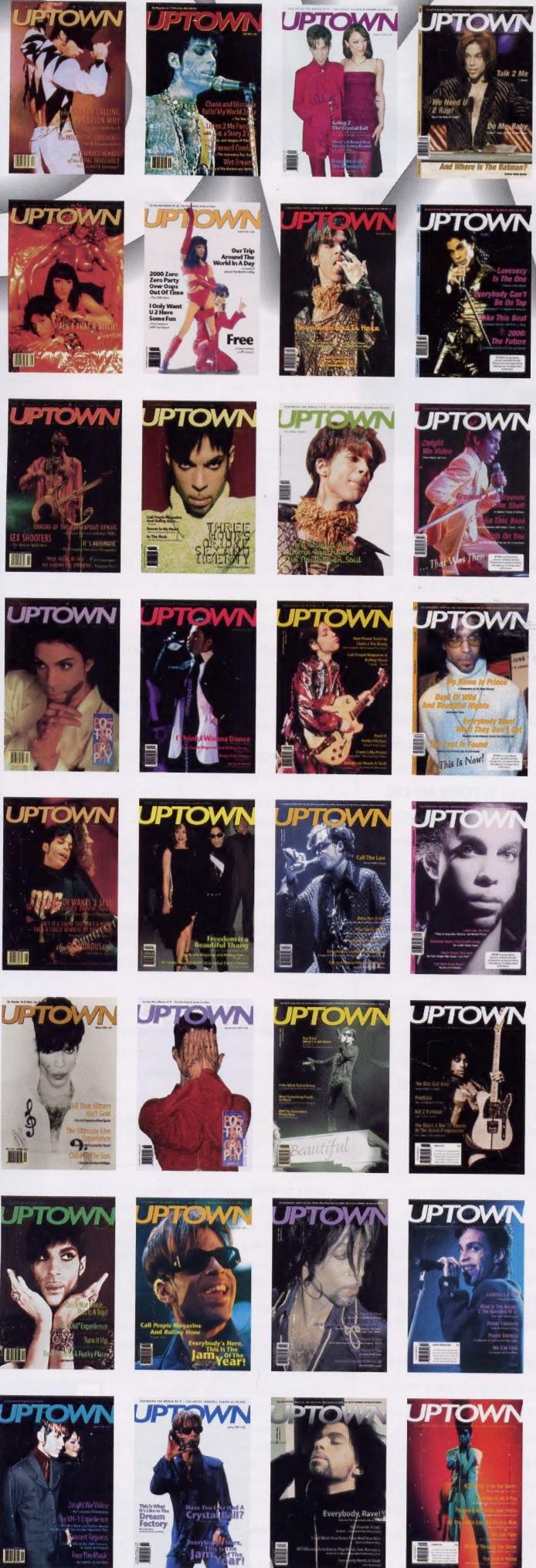
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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PRINCE RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES

**TURN IT UP 2.0** is a fully updated and thoroughly revised version of *TURN IT UP*, which was published by UPTOWN in 1997 (and sold out since 1998). **TURN IT UP 2.0** documents Prince's recordings and performances in meticulous detail, discussing both his officially released music and unofficial recordings circulating amongst a vast international network of collectors: unreleased songs, concert and rehearsal tapes, TV and radio appearances. Bootleg records are not discussed, however, since UPTOWN entered into an agreement with Prince's organisation in 1999 to avoid the documentation of these types of illegal records.

While *TURN IT UP* was originally an 80-page book, **TURN IT UP 2.0** is a considerably expanded 160-page book with many new features, including an exhaustive **DATA BANK** chapter that catalogues all Prince's recording sessions, released and unreleased songs, tours, concerts, TV and radio appearances, and press conferences. **DATA BANK**'s A-Z of released songs lists nearly 700 original Prince compositions and approximately 300 remixes and alternate versions. Meanwhile, more than 450 songs are analysed and assessed in the most complete survey of Prince's unreleased music yet published. Band members, recording engineers, and close associates offer insights into many of the recordings. The **DATA BANK** section on concerts chronicles all tours Prince has undertaken, providing details about the itineraries, set lists, opening acts, band line-ups, and show descriptions. One-off concerts, aftershow performances, and Prince's occasional guest appearances with other artists are also covered.

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See page 26 for payment instructions.